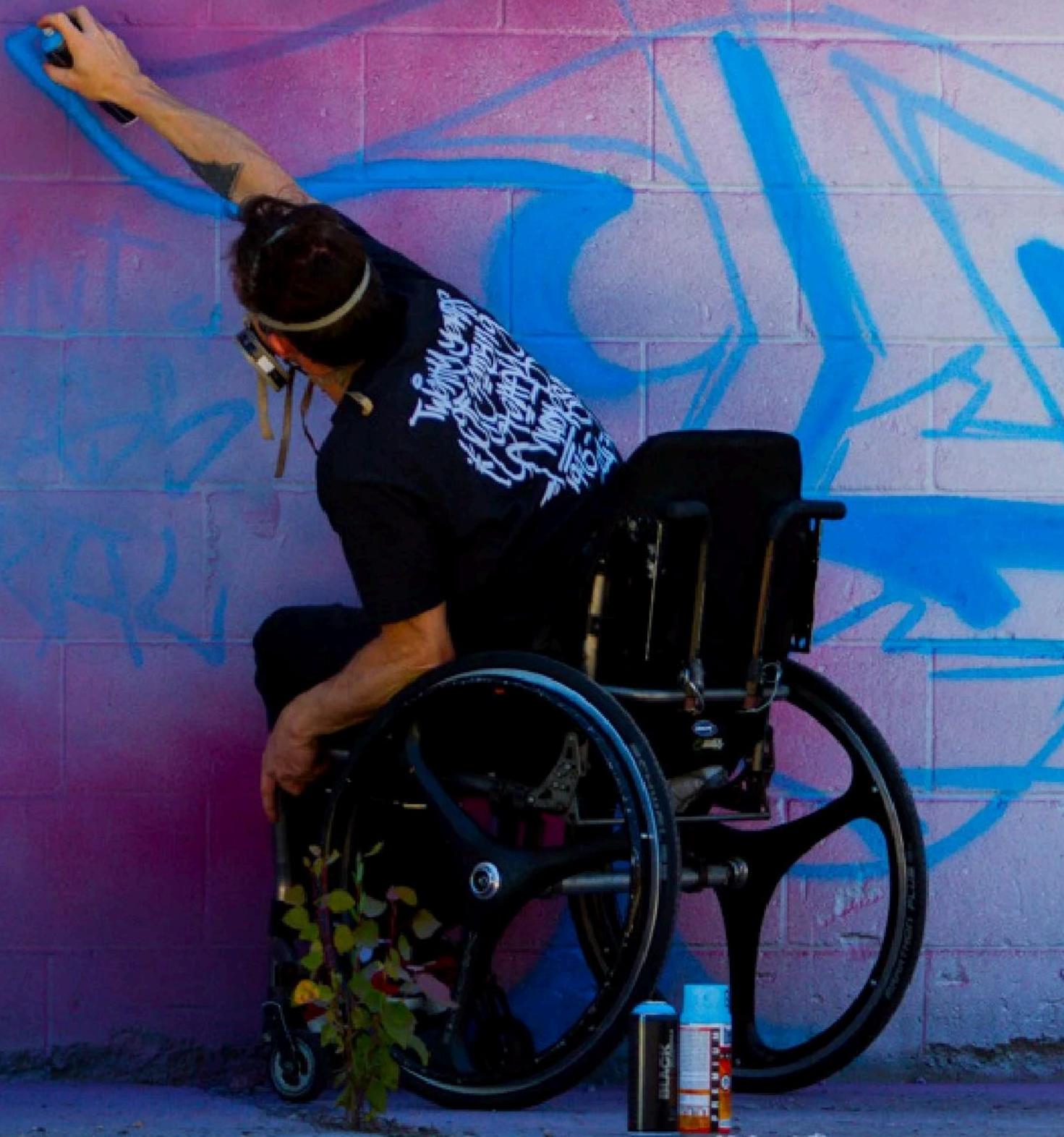


BIZARRE BEYOND BELIEF

ARTS x CULTURE x MAGAZINE

ISSUE # 10



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• ISSUE # 9

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ALAN KET



JACK HARDWICKE



BIZ360



EARTH CRUSHER



TREVOR WHEATLEY



LX ONE



BSM CREW 20TH



JASON BOTKIN

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Dedicated to the brilliant, beautiful and bizarre. Whimsical tales, visuals and various odds and ends about obscure and misunderstood sub-cultures.



ALAN KET

WELL IT'S SAFE TO ASSUME THAT IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHO ALAN KET IS, YOU DON'T KNOW JACK ABOUT GRAFFITI, NOR GIVE A SHIT ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE. BUT THIS MAN IS A LEGEND. FROM HIS PIECING STYLES WHICH ARE FRESH, VIBRANT AND COLOURFUL TO HIS ICONIC THROW UPS, THIS GUY NOT ONLY HAS SOME UNBELIEVABLY INSIGHTFUL WORDS TO SPEAK BUT THE IMAGERY TO MAKE YOUR EYES SCREAMING FOR MORE. KET ONE IS PROBABLY THE BEST WAY TO KICK OFF ANY MAGAZINE WE CAN THINK OF.



Bizarre Beyond Belief: As a graffiti artist with years of experience under his belt, can you tell us what fascinated you about the culture in the beginning?

Alan Ket: The adventures that writers had and the places that they were painting fascinated me most (tunnels, yards). The complex lettering styles that some writers created were amazing and beautiful.

BBB: The culture has clearly evolved since you began, can you describe what you have seen change?

AK: Well, styles have changed and we seem to be in a place where many writers are painting styles from the 197Os and 198Os. At one point writers wanted to come up with the next style but know it seems that this is the pursuit of a few. Of course I have been around to see it go global, become commodified by corporations looking to be cool, and be finally accepted into the art world as a collectible and real art form.

BBB: Do you feel it has evolved for better or for worse?

AK: For the most part I feel that it has evolved for the better. There are so many artists painting today that there is more artistry with all sides of the art form (tags, throw-ups, pieces).

BBB: There are so many different

aspects of graffiti (i.e. bombing, piecing etc.), do you feel there is a hierarchy among these practises?

AK: Yes, the hierarchy for me never changed since the 198Os and the pieces still reign supreme. To be able to paint a burner is at the top of the pyramid. I love all aspects but burning shows skill, creativity and a mastery of a letter style.

BBB: Considering you are not only a graffiti artist, but an author, photography, curator. How does your approach to the various fields differentiate?

AK: The work I do no matter what field I am in has to be exceptional. I start there with the desire to create something memorable and good. I do an extensive amount of research with all the projects in the different fields I work in and perhaps I do the least amount of this type of exploration with graffiti so that it doesn't influence my own style.

BBB: Were these endeavours spawned from graffiti or has there always been an interest in your life in doing something further than graffiti art?

AK: I've been interested in books, comics, photography, and many other areas since I was a very young. Graffiti took over my time and life because I feel for it deeply and because it was so much fun. It has enabled me to explore

other interests by opening the doors for me to do so. I'm fortunate in this respect and appreciate all that I have learned as an artist as a result.

BBB: You have worked with exceptional individuals and companies, how does the creative process work in a commercial setting compare to that of collaborating on a production with crew-mates?

AK: It takes much longer to make decisions for one. Many times people are unsure of what they want in the commercial setting so its up to me or other creatives to tell them what they want or what to do. In the corporate setting the looseness of graffiti is gone and its replaced with a desire for perfection versus enjoyment. While in the graffiti world, working with other writers is different because there are only creatives involved so there are always lots of ideas and opinions. However things move faster because everyone wants to always paint.

BBB: Working with large corporations can have its impact on the art, how important is it for you to maintain your own creative integrity when working with these brands?

AK: I don't see it so much as keeping my own creative integrity that is the challenge when working with brands but helping them keep their own creative integrity is. Brands always want to be fresh and adapt to trends





but that doesn't mean they have to copy others. Working with brands its always a challenge to have them realize this and do things in their way, respecting their DNA and brand. There have been times when I have felt that my integrity has been challenged and I just shut it down. There is no need for me to fold when it comes to that. If brands want to copy or create junk that I don't agree with they don't need me for that.

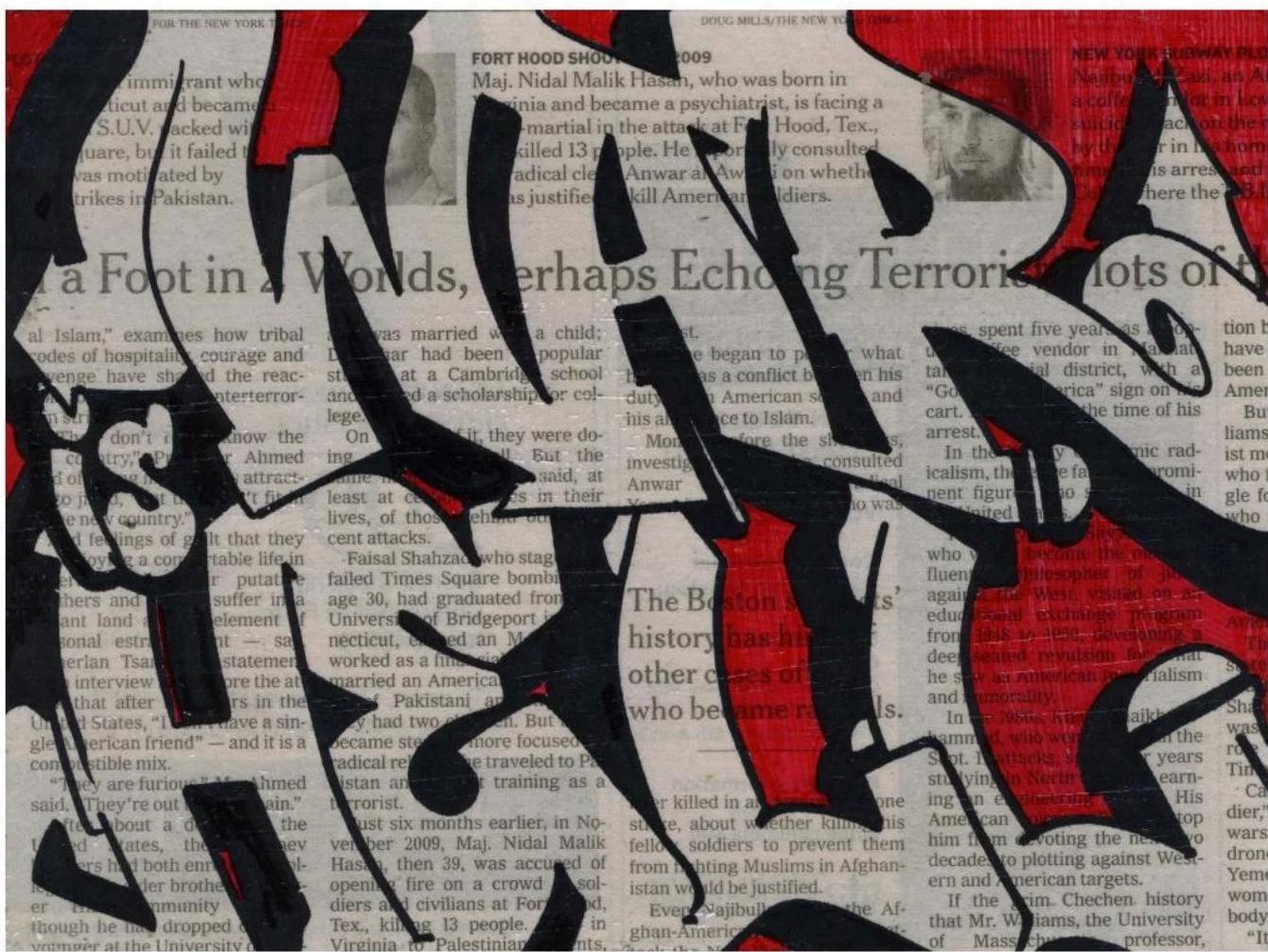
BBB: Because many believe graffiti

belongs in the streets, do you feel it's possible to bring it into the gallery and maintain its credibility?

AK: It's not graffiti when it goes into the gallery. Its art by graffiti writers. Its art in a graffiti style (for some). Its possible to maintain its credibility if what is coming indoors is fresh and beautiful. As we get older many writers just can't afford to keep painting in the streets or on trains and they have to move on. Family, bills, and monotony are a real challenge for writers that

have done it all and for those that are gifted. I believe that attempting to have a professional art career is a logical transition for many and I can't knock it. Artists create the credibility and as long as you have put in work you have it. The gallery world is different anyway and there are new rules once you decide to go that route. Your art credibility needs to be built up in that arena to be successful.

BBB: Graffiti art is a relatively new phenomenon and due to its







stigma, it's not as widely regarded as traditional artistic practises, do you feel it will ever be as accepted as fine-art and photography?

AK: Yes, in time it will be and its happening at a rapid pace. Much faster than it did for photography as fine art for example. In the 40 odd years its been around there have been museum exhibitions, hundreds

of gallery shows, commissions, public installations, serious collectors buying it, and a huge fan base; for photography it took 70 years into its invention before the MOMA opened a photography department. The MOMA already has works from writers in their collection now.

BBB: Are there any projects that readers and fans should be on the

lookout for in the future?

AK: I am working with a slew of artists to launch graffiticollector.com to give people more access to affordable art by graffiti artists that are not looking at the gallery seen as an outlet but still have great art to share. I also have an artist driven brand launching next year with collaborations with some of the best known writers in the world. Stay tuned.

WWW.ALANKET.COM

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MONDAY, AUGUST 12, 2013

ABOVE THE CLOUDS

National

The New York Times





CUCURUZ CANDY GIORDANO NEWSI



JACK HARDWICKE

JACK HARDWICKE IS ONE OF OUR MOST FAVOURITE CREATIVE INDIVIDUALS (AND FIRST REPEAT INTERVIEWEE) ON THE FACE OF THE PLANET. HIS WORK CAPTIVATES THE VIEWER IN WAYS THAT OTHER ARTISTS COULD ONLY DREAM OF. ON TOP OF THAT, THE MAN IS A STAND UP GUY WHOSE ALWAYS GOT AMAZING STUFF TO SAY AND SPEAKS CONCISELY WITH CONVICTION. THE MAN HAS LIKE, A GAZILLION FOLLOWERS ON TUMBLR. SO, IF YOU HAVEN'T SEEN OF HIS WORK ALREADY. YOU'VE PROBABLY BEEN LIVING UNDER A ROCK.



Bizarre Beyond Belief: We know your career has come across some new paths such as design work. How does your design work differ from your early photography work?

Jack Hardwicke: Most of my work comprises certain photographic elements, but I have from time to time worked on projects without the camera. I think it's a little different starting with a completely blank canvas, but I work in a similar way with both processes, building bottom up.

BBB: You've told us you feel like you're "barely a photographer anymore". Is this more of a metaphor or do you mean you have literally taken a step back from being behind the lens?

JH: I find it quite challenging to describe what I do at this point. There is and always has been a very strong photographic element to all of my work but I don't think it is 'photography'. I think that's misleading and I frankly don't consider myself qualified with a lens in the to call myself that. There's always this need to categorize things - what kind of music do you play? What kind of art do you make? - I think for some people that's quite easy to answer, but I don't think it's at all necessary. I just make things. I often find the process irrelevant.

BBB: Also, you've been working with Jono McCleery and Ninja

Tune Records, to name a couple. Can you describe the origins of the connection and your artistic concept?

JH: The truth is I hadn't heard Jono's music until the label asked me to work on the 'Fire In My Hands' release. So I had a few listens to some of his work online, and then eventually I got the tracks for the single. It really wasn't immediate but I completely fell in love with both the songs by the end and that really helped me to form a connection. I ended up lying in bed one day feeling pretty under the weather and listening to the tracks and I was working on some images I'd had for a few weeks and not really known where they were headed. I had this very clear idea of there being a lot of negative space in the track and that I wanted to represent that on the cover art. I wanted quite a stripped down feel. I had shown Jono a few ideas but none that I was that thrilled with but all of a sudden I found the right tone and palette for the release. I think the image works perfectly with the record and I know Jono felt the same. I have already finished the work for the next single and started working on his forthcoming full length which, judging by the upcoming single, is going to be one hell of a record. I've fallen for his music in a big way and I think that makes working on the artwork easy and rewarding. I hope we can continue to work together further down the line and I really hope his career takes off with this next release because his

music deserves more ears.

BBB: How does working with individuals in the music industry compare and contrast from your own personal projects?

JH: It was a challenge. I usually work very loosely, approaching things with a very flexible attitude. Working on the Jono records required a little more focus and conceptualisation. On the first pitch I must have come up with about half a dozen options because I just wanted to find something that he was happy with. For me, producing music art is a thrill and something that I absolutely want to continue to do but it accounts for a small percentage of the final product. If somebody buys a piece of my work, that's 90% of what they are getting, save 10% for presentation, framing etc, with music art you are paying for the music, the artwork is completely secondary. However when the two are perfectly complementary then it's an added bonus and makes the physical possession of the music more worthwhile. Music is my biggest passion in life and nothing frustrates me more than lazy and boring music art. That's something I want to address, and I think it's an art form or an area of art which is a little neglected - everything is digitalised now and there's less focus on making physical products. It's great to see people like Andy Gilmore, Neil Krugg and Leif Podhajsky helping redress that balance a little bit and I think people seem to



be taking more of an interest in music art.

BBB: Moreover, you've been working with an Austrian fashion

company, Muhlmann. When and how did this come about?

JH: Bernd, whose company it is, approached me having seen my work

on Tumblr with the idea of printing my work on to fabric and making some summer garments from them. It was kind of something that I had thought about before and printing to material

was something which interested me so I was definitely open to it. When I read a bit about the company I was sold. It's a limited range, totaling less than 100 pieces, all of which were handmade in the Alps and sold in their

Austrian stores. It's all very romantic.

BBB: Did you ever take yourself for a fashion designer or did this come as a surprise?

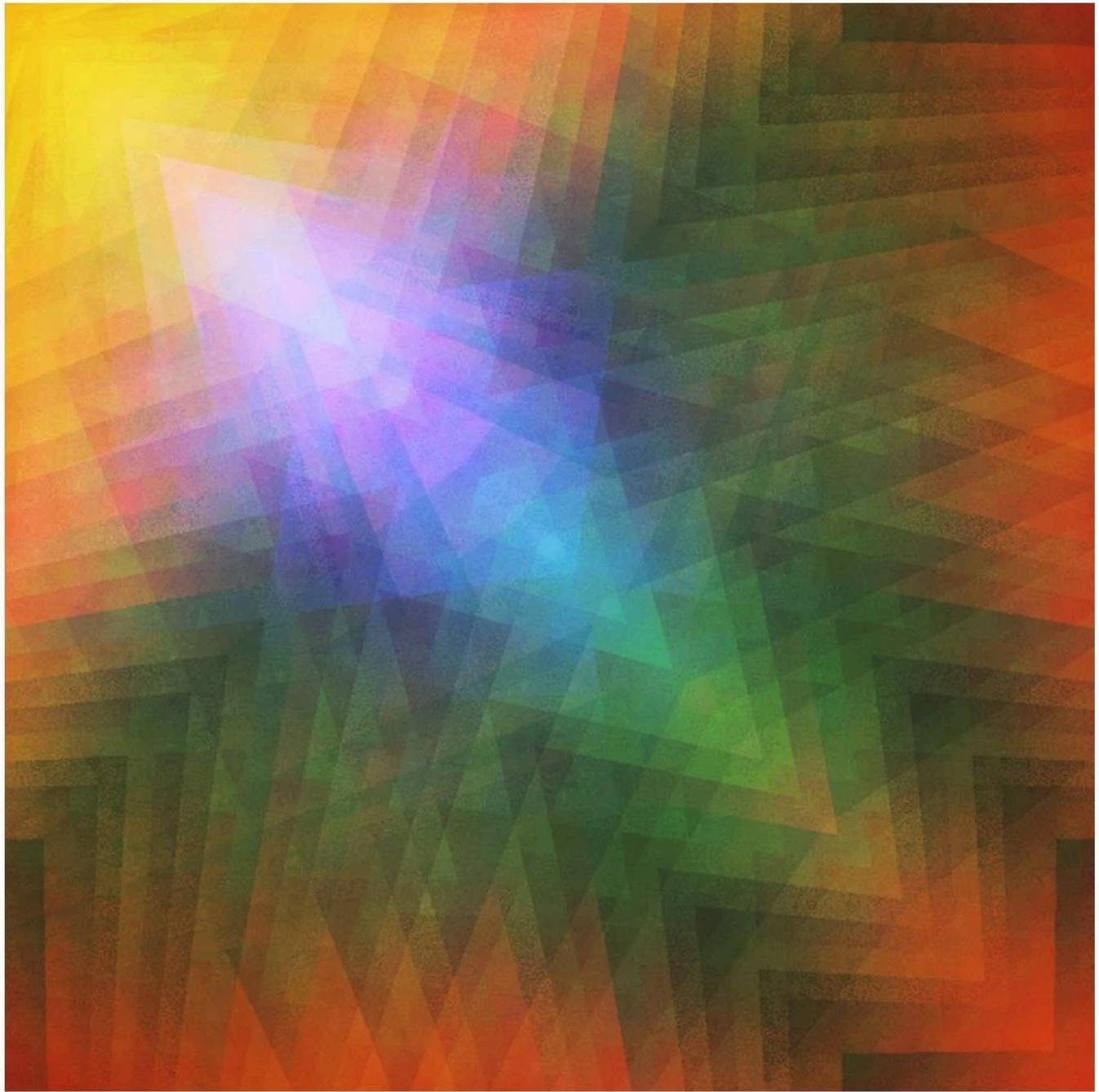
JH: I would have to guess that I am possibly one of the least fashionable people to ever have my own clothing series. But it's cool, and though I gave the samples I received away to one of my favourite people, I loved

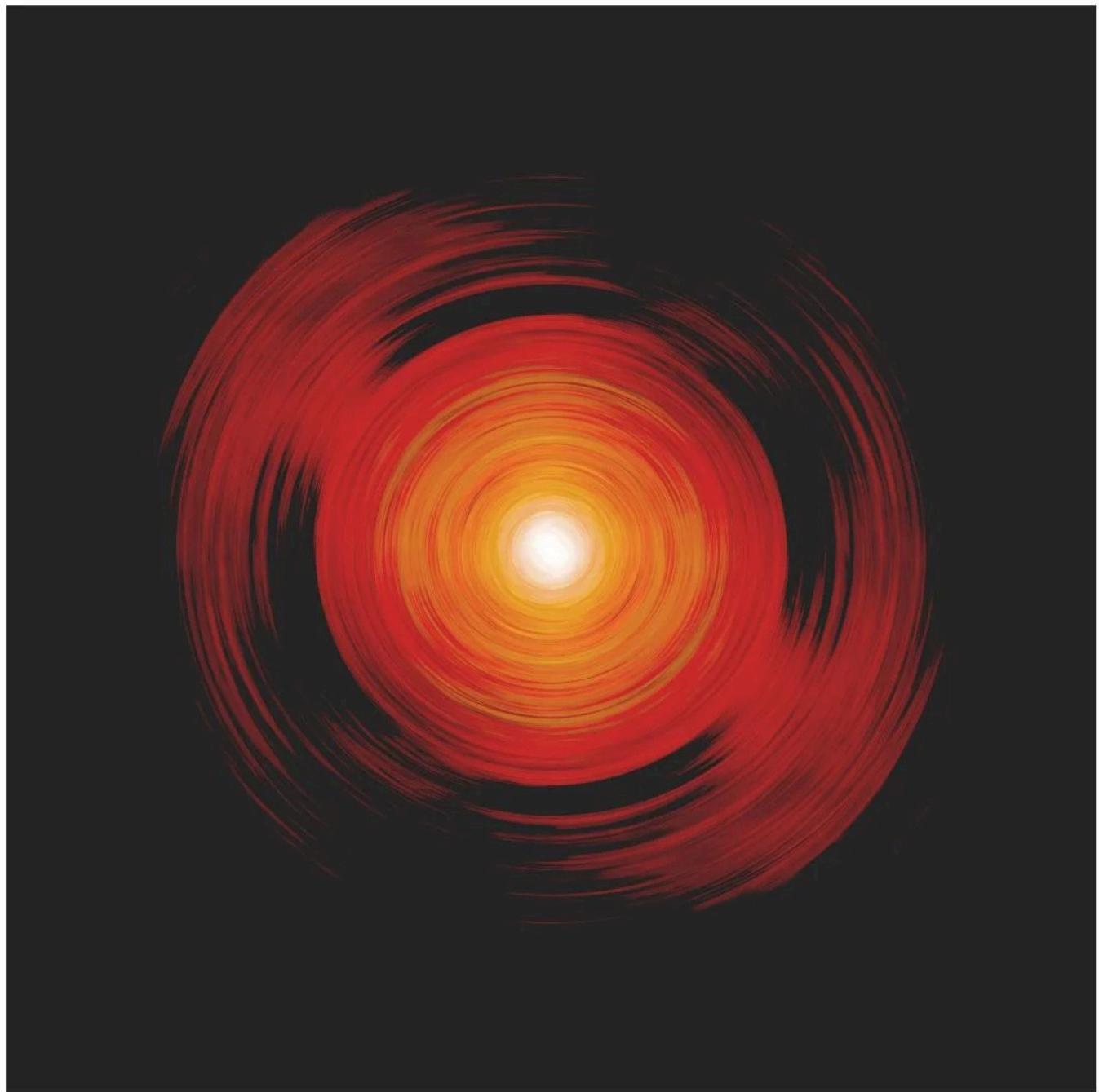


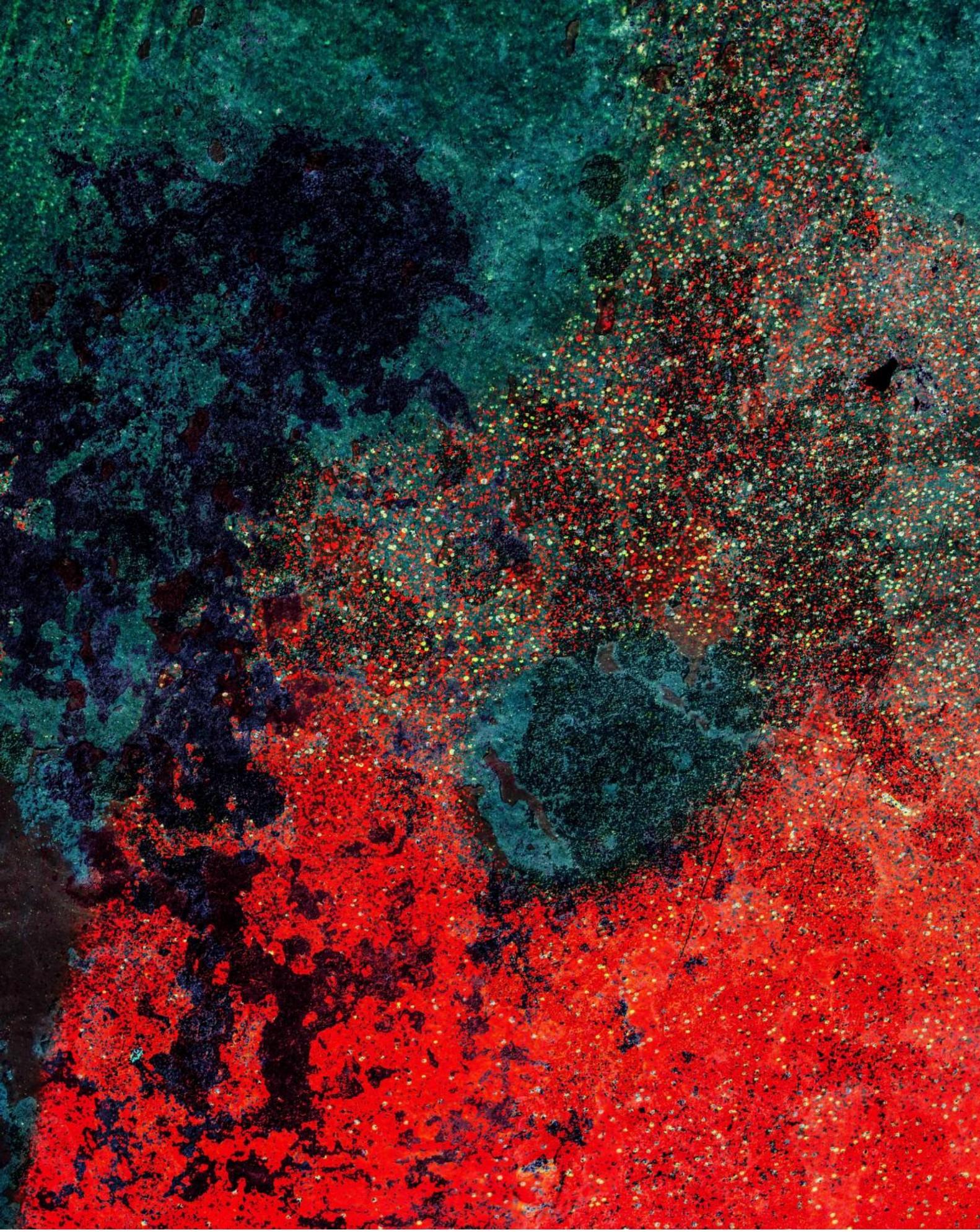
seeing the final outcome - it was really cool seeing my work put to another use like that. I'd definitely be happy working in fashion again and hopefully something will materialize (pardon the pun) with Muhlmann sometime in

the future. I am very passionate about aesthetics and I think I can appreciate all kinds of visual art. To my mind, fashion is definitely a form of artistic expression, it's often considered to be an extremely superficial industry

but it's just another way of expressing ourselves and our identity. There's not much of a difference between putting paint on a canvas and putting garments on your body. You're presenting something to the rest of the world.







BBB: What have these new experiences given your artistic toolbox that you may not have had before?

JH: I think I'm still remarkably young in terms of my artistic growth and I've not been doing this long enough to really have a complete toolbox. Developing new skills is definitely something that is necessary to develop artistically and not just sit on what you know and what you have. I'm trying to work with as many interesting and creative people as possible and I think that will help me to grow and allow me to always see things differently.

BBB: Because of these experiences and tools, where do you see the direction of your craft continuing in the near future?

JH: I have been floating around for a

long time, artistically I feel that isn't a problem so long as you're always moving in some direction with your work.

But what I want to do is find a way to get my work out there and to involve myself in bigger and more focused projects - put that work towards something specific.

Music and Music Art has become my priority and that's what has lead me to start my own Art Direction Collective with Matthew Evans (AKA SnowSkull) via a project called Sleep/Walk. The project has only just begun but we are very clear in our minds about what we want to achieve - and in its most simplistic terms that is to coordinate beautiful and interesting visual art for musicians and producers who we respect and to enhance the combined output of everybody involved. But we hope that Sleep/Walk will become something bigger than that. We want it to be a collective

of creative minds working together to make inspirational and original artwork, and hopefully encourage people to own records, to go to live shows, to support artists and reward those who do. We're going to try to have as much fun doing it as is humanly possible. In the immediate future we are about to put out our first collaborative project as 'SleepWalkers' - based on our mutual love and appreciation for dream-space and dream exploration. We are both very different artists but we share a very deep aesthetical connection which I think will help us to work together for a long time. Thanks for the questions and for your continued support, I love what you guys do and BBB is always a great read.

Much Love,

Jack.

WWW.SLEEPWALKARTCOLLECTIVE.COM

WWW.THEEIDOPHUSIKON.COM

WWW.SNOWSKULL-ART.TUMBLR.COM

*ON THE NEXT PAGE IS WORK FROM THE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT "**SLEEP/WALK**"





BIZ360

WE DID A FEATURE ON BIZ360 A COUPLE OF ISSUES AGO AND WE'RE SUPER STOKED TO HAVE AN UPDATE ON THE MAN'S WORK. HAILING FROM GREECE AND BRINGING SOME OF THE MOST OBSCURE LETTER STRUCTURE WE'VE EVER SEEN. BIZ HAS GOT THE GOODS TO MAKE YOU RETHINK YOUR APPROACH TO GRAFFITI AND STREET-ART.









360

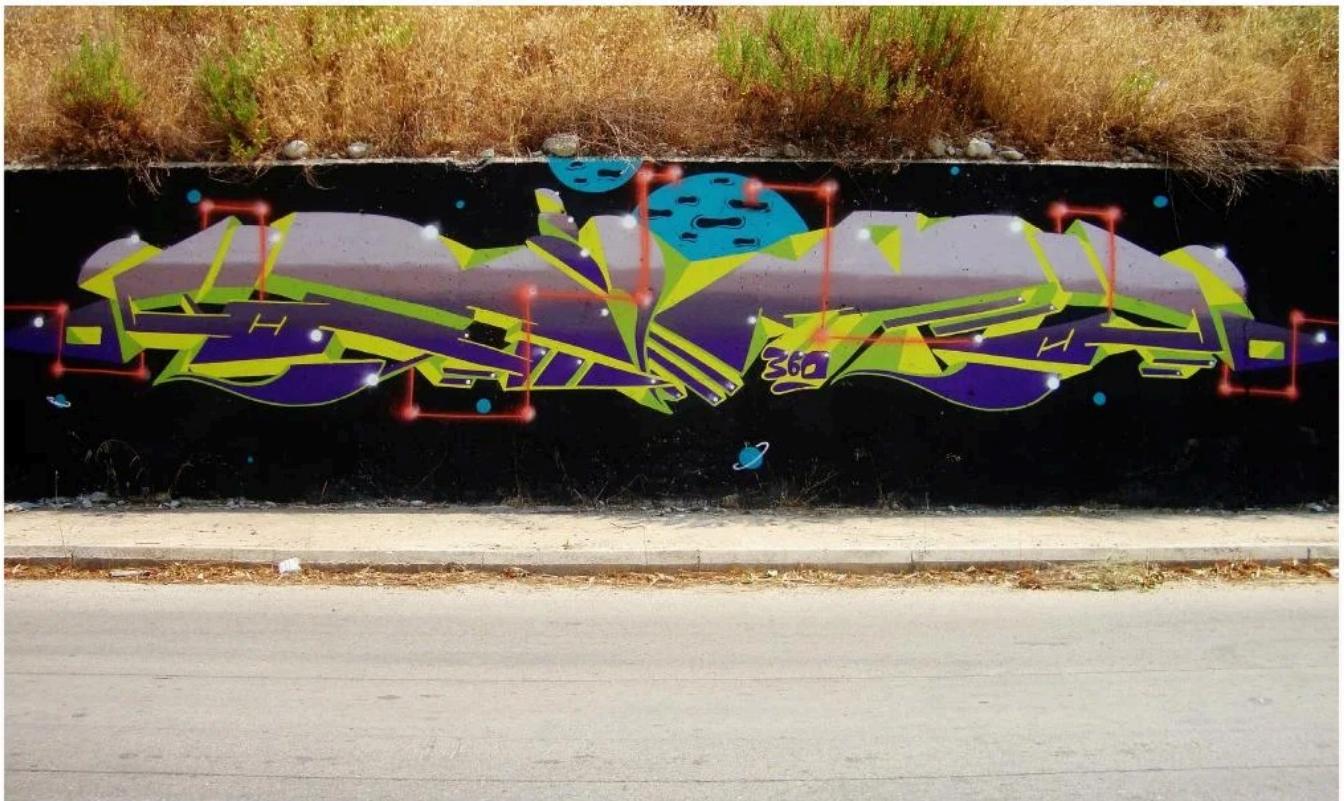


After some months in Europe it's time for the coming back to the homeland.
A lot of experiences and passion are mixed with new ideas and the result is an improvement in style that gives a more elegant line and a

composition of stronger fill in.
The return to the hometown and the inner visiting of different Greek cities in the summer time are imprinted on the new section of photos from BIZ 360. Athens , Patra , Volos , Arta , Karditsa are

some of the cities that became stops for painting and actions in the country. Crewmates , friends and nice meetings with new different people are parts of this story .
A story that continues and hopefully will never end...

WWW.BIZ36OCITYCAT.TUMBLR.COM









EARTH CRUSHER

WE HERE AT BBB WISH WE COULD SAY THINGS ABOUT EARTH CRUSHER THAT YOU MAY OR MAY NOT KNOW. HOWEVER, WE HAVE BEEN PERSUADED BY THE OMNIPOTENT BEING THAT HE IS TO JUST RELAY THE MESSAGE THAT YOU ALL MUST READ THIS INTERVIEW OR YOU WILL BE EXECUTED IN THE STREETS. PROBABLY MORE POWERFUL THAN CHUCK NORRIS, STEVEN SEGAL AND THE DOS EQUIS MAN COMBINED. EARTH CRUSHER IS GOD.



Bizarre Beyond Belief: What are the origins behind Earth Crusher and when did it begin its reign of tyranny?

Earthe Crusher: Earth Crusher is the embodiment of the secret ruling class; the PR super mind, the master of

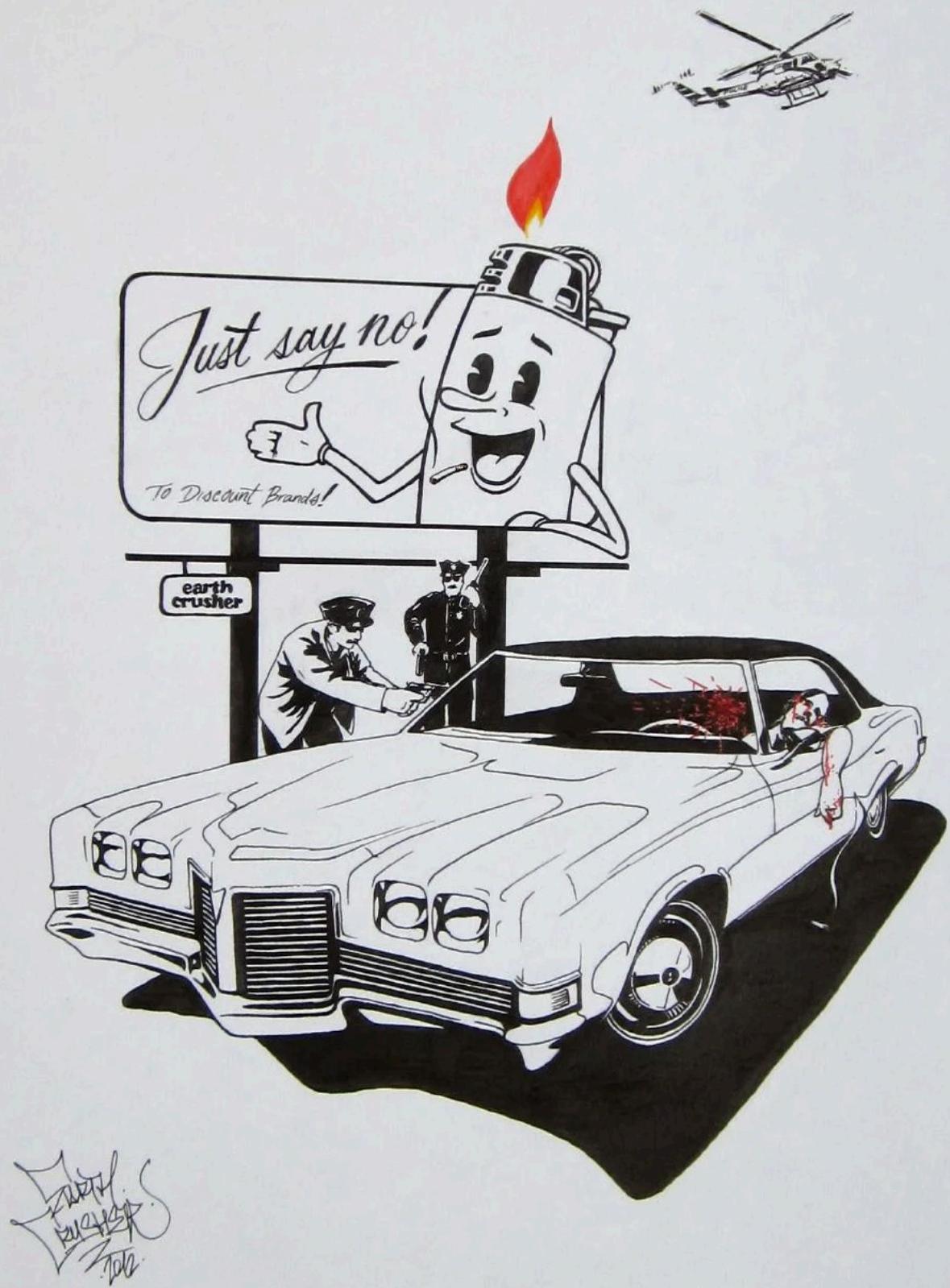
money. As long as there has been an opportunity for corruption, there has been Earth Crusher.

BBB: Why has Earth Crusher chosen to use Montreal as their home-base to dominate as opposed

to other major world cities?

EC: Montreal is a great place for someone like me to hideout; Mansions in Westmount, lake front properties in Beaconsfield, plenty of shitty condos and apartments to bleed money from











the poor, lower class neighborhoods to gentrify, and a corrupt government to boot.

BBB: What are the fundamental propositions or strategies in which Earth Crusher will completely dominate the planet earth?

EC: My power comes from manufacturing people's beliefs, faiths and ideals to suit my ends. This is made possible by gathering vast amounts of data on every man woman and child on earth.

BBB: You say "With a complete

lack of moral compass, we are able to concentrate solely on generating profit and nothing else." - What avenues would you take to maximize profit margins?

EC: This is one of my favourite games! Every industry is connected in some way. Changing one is only the beginning of a rippling chain of events for others. Altering the molecular structure of corn or wheat to create bigger yields lowers production costs for processed foods. Not only do you see rising profits in the food industry, but also in the pharmaceutical industry

as new drugs are now required to combat the diseases associated with the poison that was created. As long as I have a grip on every industry, there will be infinite possibilities for profit.

BBB: Earth Crusher's works range from walls to billboards, how does your approach to the different artistic practices differentiate?

EC: Each medium attracts a different audience and affects them in a different way. My approach starts with identifying who will be seeing the message and in what circumstance.

Creating art isn't just about painting pictures, it's about creating an environment that swallows the hearts and minds of the consumers, leaving them with a mental scar that can

never fade.

BBB: Which of these fields do you find the most effective to sway and manipulate the general public?

EC: No medium is too small or too big. Like a good graffiti artist, you need a healthy diet of methods to convey your message; stickers, murals, billboards, TV, radio, rollers, posters, t-shirts, tags,





J. Roth
2007







internet blogs, events, etc. Power is in numbers and the more opportunities you create for your message, the better chance it has at spreading like a virus.

BBB: Does Earth Crusher have any formal training in his artistic methods or has it evolved through natural evolution?

EC: Both, I never stop gathering information and learning. Controlling the global population is a full time job and it's not over 'til the fat lady dies of a cheeseburger overdose.

BBB: You have a range of extremely

corporate clientele, can you describe the attitudes of these companies and how easy or hard it was to collaborate with?

EC: I find it easy to work with like-minded individuals and corporations, but they all occasionally let human emotions get in the way of profits as they are owned and operated by humans. Luckily I am a machine and do not suffer from this unfortunate circumstance which is why I am so successful.

BBB: Why have these corporations not been swallowed up and destroyed by Earth Crusher?

EC: Everything has its purpose; I control everything, either directly or indirectly. People, along with corporations, perform better when they are unaware that they are being controlled. The illusion of freedom I created is a very effective one.

BBB: We see many of EC's walls have the moniker of "DRE", who is "DRE" and what role does he play in Earth Crusher?

EC: I often collaborate with Montreal writers Dre and Five because they like their art the way I like my business: Flawless.

FIVE

LONG





BBB: Can you name three of your favourite tyrannical figures?

EC: J.P. Morgan, Lockheed Martin

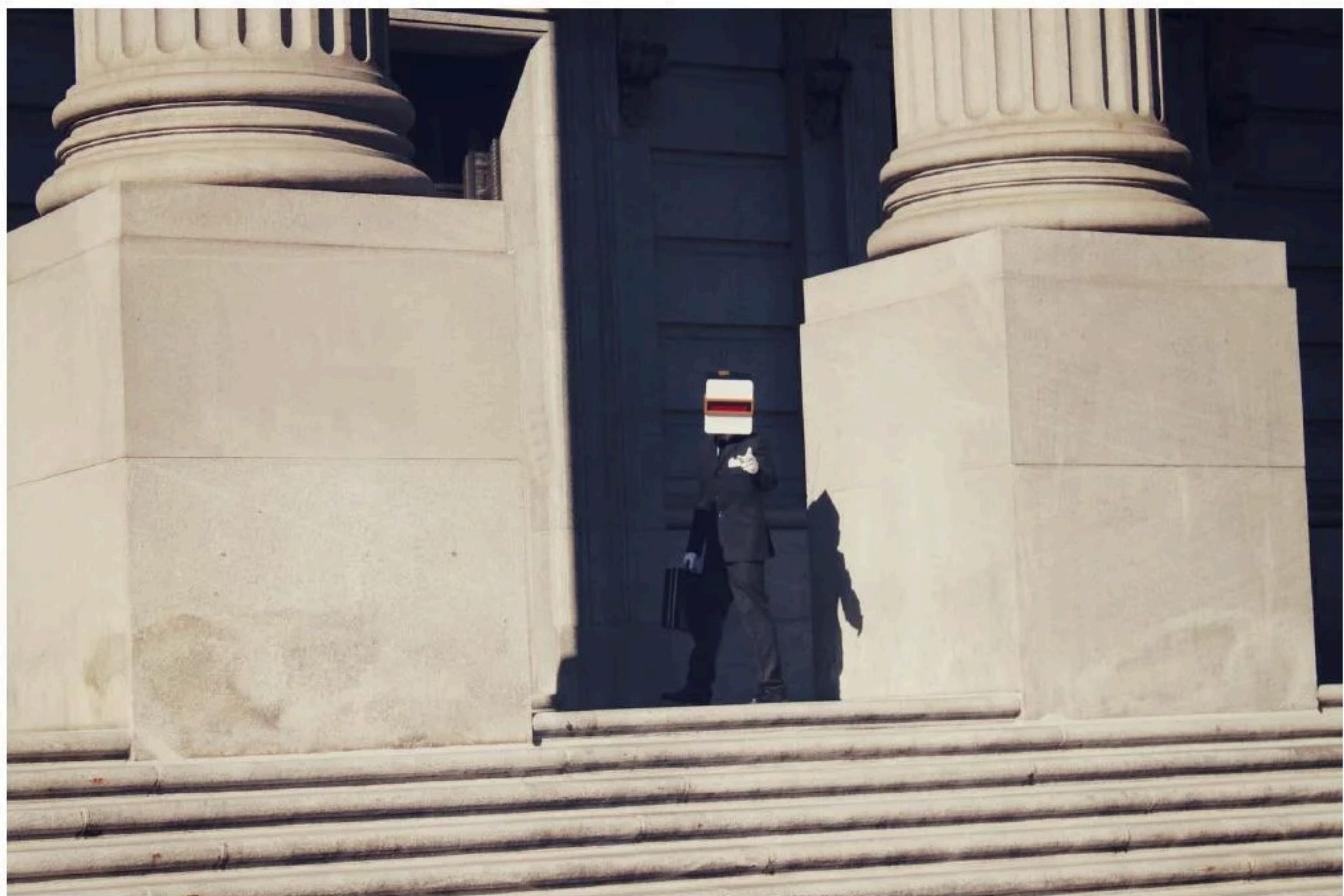
and Monsanto.

BBB: What can the slaves of the world expect to fear in the next 25

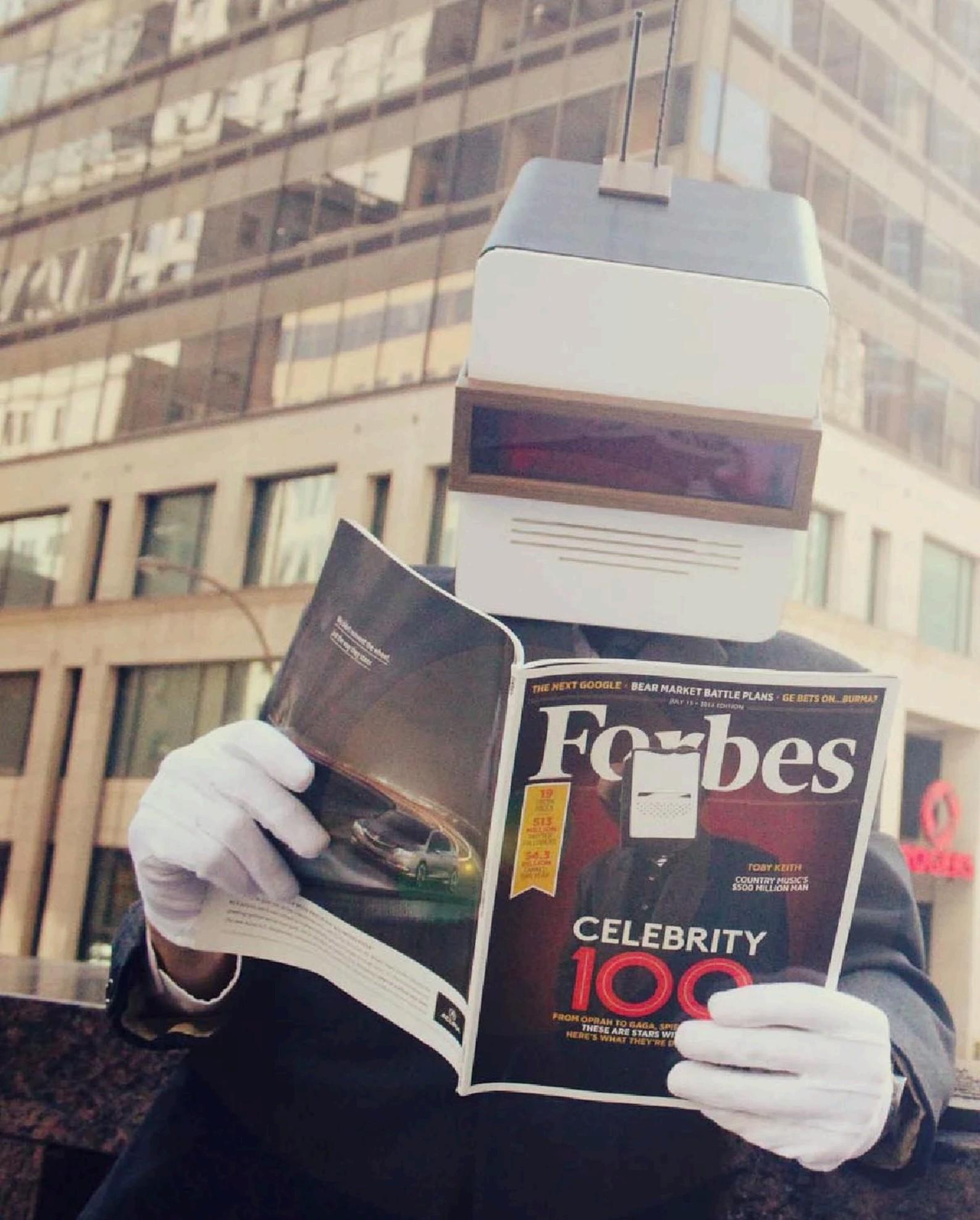
years from Earth Crusher?

EC: A new boy band, more viral cat videos, and sluttier kids.

WWW.EARTHCRAshER.COM







THE NEXT GOOGLE • BEAR MARKET BATTLE PLANS • GE BETS ON... BURMA
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Forbes

CELEBRITY 100

FROM OPRAH TO GAGA, SPICE UP YOUR LIFE
THESE ARE STARS WHO ARE CHANGING THE WORLD
HERE'S WHAT THEY'RE DOING

Toby Keith
COUNTRY MUSIC'S
\$500 MILLION MAN





TREVOR WHEATLEY

We here at BBB have had the pleasure to know Trevor for many years and are proud to call him family. With an unrelenting amount of talent that is well beyond his years, Trevor is bound to make a huge splash in the art community both Canadian and Internationally very soon. With a drive and determination other artists can only dream of, Trevor's skill set speaks for itself and we can guarantee that if he isn't one of your favourite artists already, he will be now.





Bizarre Beyond Belief: We all know that the arts is an extremely difficult occupation to succeed in, what made you decide to truly make a push for this career path?

Trevor Wheatley: I'm not sure if I've decided this is the occupation for me. I really enjoy making work and seeing it develop. It's extremely rewarding. The last few years have been a balance of making art while working on other endeavours. Maybe one day it will become solely about making art. Hopefully.

BBB: You received formal training

in Montreal and subsequently relocated to Toronto, do you believe that it is possible to achieve success in a Canadian city as opposed to moving to New York or London?

TW: I'm young and I don't know exactly what Canada has to offer. It's hard to know the ins and outs of a scene one is relatively new to. What I can tell up until this point is it depends what you base success on. The scene here is obviously smaller and local notoriety can come more easily. However, financially it seems there isn't the infrastructure. I went to a lot of great shows this year where I didn't

see the work selling. Artists survive largely on grants and not on selling work to collectors. I've seen a lot of Canadian artists leave the country and do really well.

BBB: Your formal training was at Concordia University, do you believe that attending an artistic institution was an integral part of your artistic development?

TW: I Believe it was incredibly important to my development. If I didn't attend art school then I wouldn't be making work today. Up until that point I really only made and looked









at street work. It was good for me to explore other possibilities. I still keep in touch with some of my professors; many of them are super talented and still offer valuable feedback.

BBB: There are certain ideologies and individuals that attend these institutions, how did you feel you mesh with these systems?

TW: In art school you really get a mixed bag of students, professors, and ideologies. I realized this quickly and latched myself onto professors

that I felt I could relate and learn most from. Concordia was cool, the teachers would encourage institutional critique and make us question the infrastructure we were paying to be a part of.

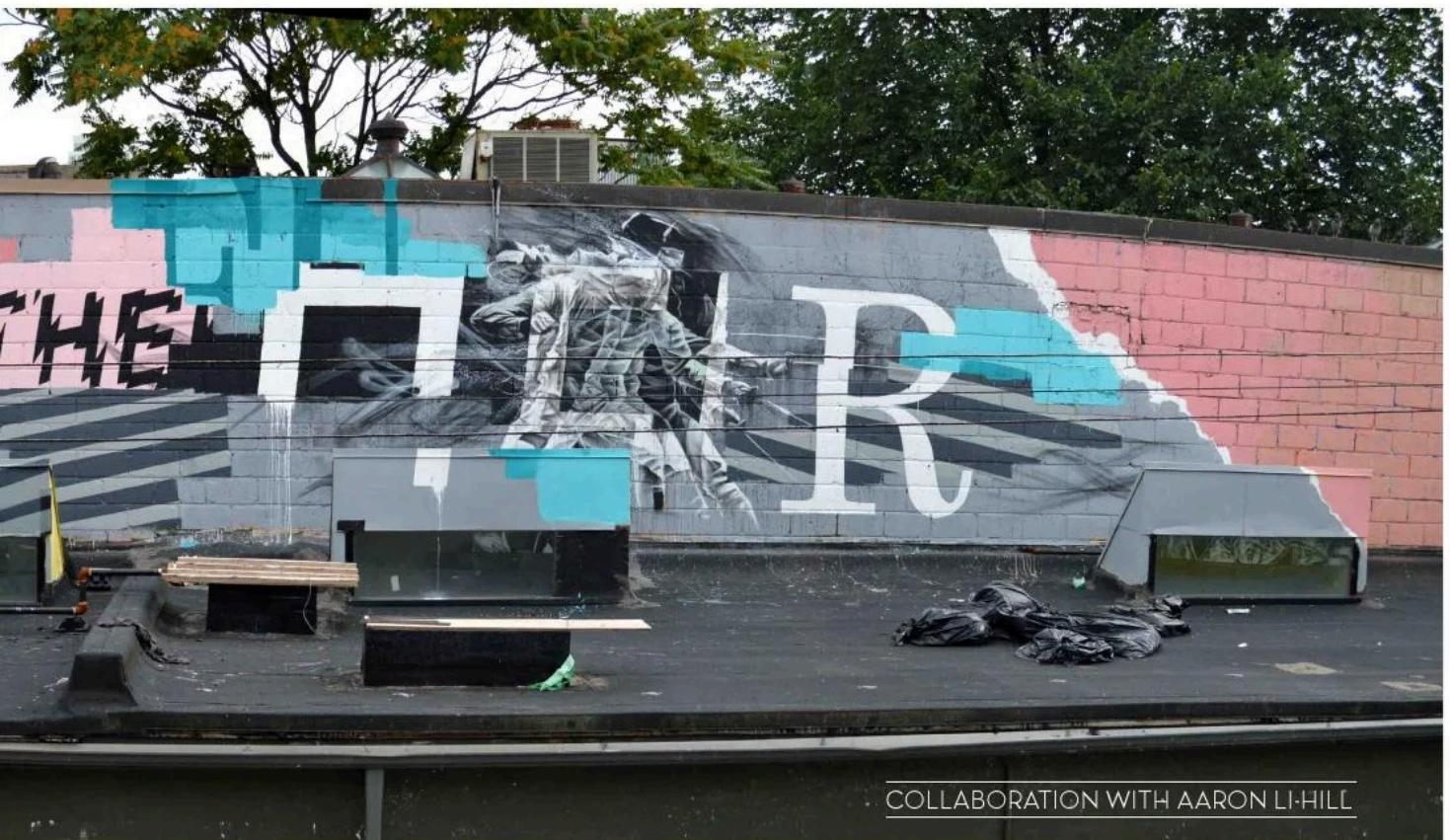
BBB: Your aesthetic is sophisticated and layered, can you describe your approach and processes to your work?

TW: My process is constantly changing. My computer and my digital projector have become

extremely important tools for putting my work together. I use them to build compositions of text, patterns and gradients. The important part of making a piece to me is the composition and getting the idea across through a series of layered events. I'd like for people to really stop and see what is happening in all the layers, the imperfections and the editing that is happening. The digital aspect of the work is interesting to me, to use vectors to make imagery, then hand paint them. It will never be perfect, even if it looks that way. The







COLLABORATION WITH AARON LI-HILL

finished product has no record of any digital steps.

BBB: The bulk of your work contains typography, what is it that interests you about typefaces as opposed to portraiture or figure-based art?

TW: In short, people connect with typography. They inherently understand it as they have had a relationship with it from a very early age. They associate different ideas, places, or moods with certain typefaces, without often realizing why. I try to exploit these connections and make the interaction from the piece to the viewer a bit more complicated than they are used to. They have to spend a bit more time with the work to take in the message or general idea. Communication and accessibility are themes I think about a lot when I'm making work and typeface allows me to easily explore these ideas in a way that a portrait or figurative work would not.

BBB: That being said, you are a graffiti artist of well-repute, how does this correlate with your fine-art endeavours?

TW: I think it certainly informs it on some level. I credit everything back to graffiti. I only make studio work

because I painted graffiti for many years.

BBB: Do you feel it has helped or hindered your development as an aspiring artist?

TW: Helped. The two are more closely intertwined than they look!

BBB: Recently many of your works are collaborations, how does this affect your creative process?

TW: It changes the process drastically. Its hard working with other people, it really forces you outside of a personal comfort zone, which can produce varied results. I like it, I usually end up feeling that the collaboration was useful, that it will help my own process and future works develop. I recently worked on a large mural with Aaron Li-Hill when he came to town from New York. We worked on it every evening for a week, and were both really happy with the end result. These instances make taking the chance on a collaboration worth it.

BBB: You also work in film, how do you feel the creative fields differ from the art to the film industry?

TW: In my situation they differ

entirely. I work on large film sets, which have large teams and individual creative intuition is not often used. Its good work, but it's nicer to get to the studio and work and develop my own ideas.

BBB: You have recently been represented by Hashtag Gallery in Toronto, can you describe its origins and what it has done for you mentally?

TW: The space is owned and operated by two young designers. They are going into their second year of operation after a really well received first year. Mentally, it's helped me a lot. I booked my first solo show with them, which will occur in the spring of 2014. Its nice to develop work and know it will end up being shown in a reputable space.

BBB: As a young artist with many things on the horizons, are there any new projects, events or endeavours readers should be on the look out for?

TW: I've been slowly compiling work to release a small book, hopefully I will have it ready to go for the opening of my show at Hashtag gallery in the spring!

WWW.TREVORWHEATS.COM







@HASHTAG GALLERY [TORONTO]



LX ONE IS A FAR CRY FROM YOUR TRADITIONAL GRAFFITI WRITER. HIS TECHNIQUE AND SKILLS ARE ON PAR WITH THE BEST OF THEM AND THE MAN IS DEFINITELY NOT SHY TO TRY NEW AND INNOVATIVE TECHNIQUES TO BLEND VARIOUS ARTISTIC PRACTICES IN TO THE STREET-ART AND GRAFFITI REALM. AN ABSOLUTELY PLEASURE TO HAVE HIM GRACE THE PAGES OF BBB AND WE KNOW THAT YOU'LL LOVE HIS WORK AS MUCH AS WE DO.



Bizarre Beyond Belief: Can you describe your origins as an artist and your ideologies within your practice?

LXONE: I was born in 1979 in Strasbourg, France. I began DJing and writing in the mid 90s. Strasbourg was a really busy place for hip-hop with the influence from Germany. Being from Europe allows me to travel through Europe and more and share with great people around the globe. I moved to Paris for a while and I now live in The Basque coast near Biarritz, nature everywhere, quiet place, lot of inspiration.

BBB: Your work is very geometrical, what is it about blocks and shapes which has led you to implement them

in your aesthetic?

LX1: Big influence from nature and architecture. Basically everything surrounding me actually. I'm trying to find something minimal to represent what I see. I use lines, shapes, colors to create perspective and feelings, in order to make the viewer travel inside the picture. [My inspirations are] Vasarely, MC Escher, Lichtenstein, van Doesburg, Warhol.

BBB: It seems spray-paint is your primary medium of creation, however, you do utilize others, how does your approach and process differentiate between various mediums?

LX1: Wood, paper, cardboard,

recycled materials/found materials, marketry, joinery, and I hope to be able to explore new ways as much as possible. The paintings are a mixed tech process. Starting with the background adding texture to it then working with layers and layers creating depth in the image as if you were experiencing a landscape. I remember a discussion we had with Remi/Rough, Jaybo and Carlos mare how they were dealing with sculpting (all part of the AOC) started wood sculptures a couple of years ago and add a really new perception of the painting.

BBB: Many spray-paint artists tend toward creating letter or portrait-based artworks, what attracted you



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to stray away and create abstract content?

LX1: I'm getting into abstract representation of landscapes or faces or letters.

Lots of reference to graffiti but not only [graffiti, I also use] optical, cinetical art, pop culture [as inspiration]. Colours, shapes and lines extracted from the original subject and interpreted within the aim to get a minimalist, isometrical version as if it were pixelized.

BBB: The use of correct colour choices are an integral part of your work, how do you choose your palette before creating a piece?

LX1: Palette comes the original subject. Photography is an important part of it to create a database of colours, shapes, symbols, message etc. Computers and machines. Analog vs digital. Considering the eye is the first sensor, I use computers, plotters, etc, and then create by hand.

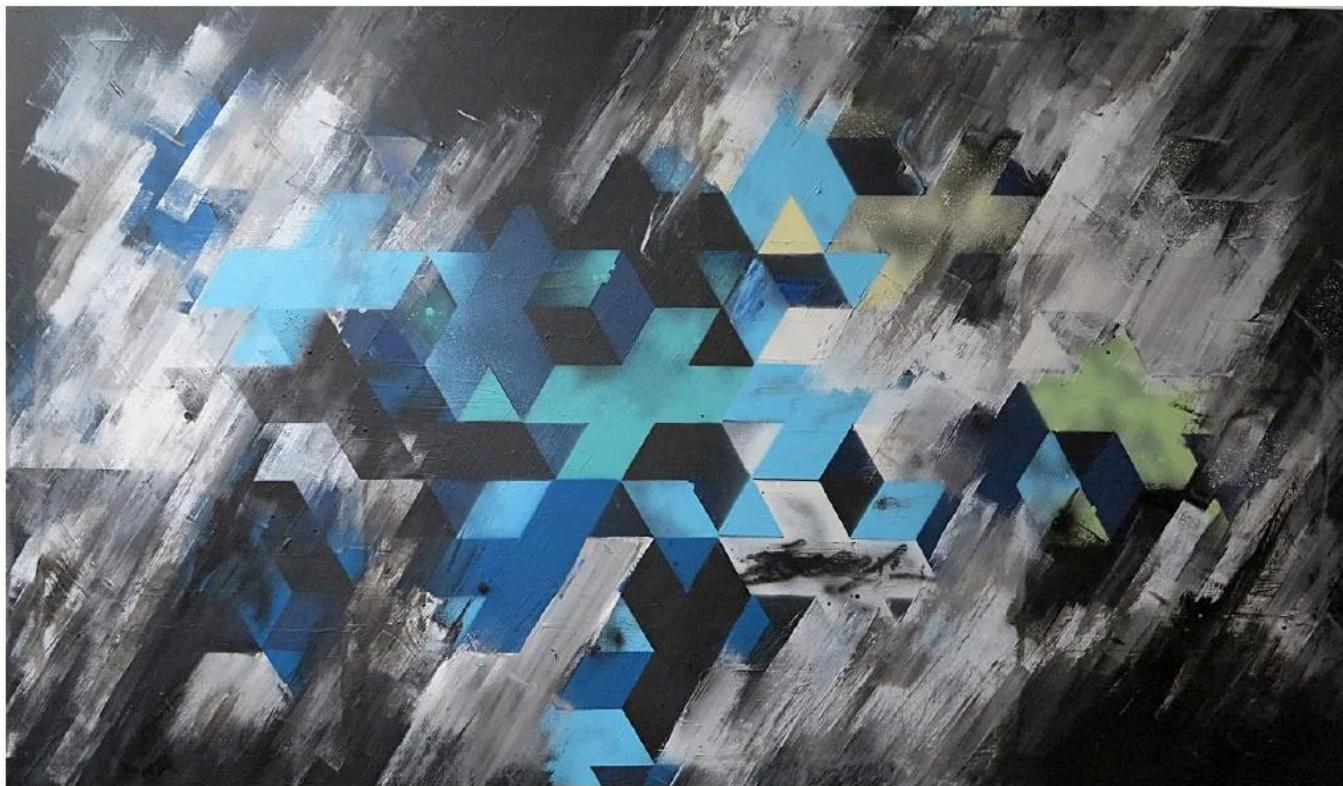
BBB: It's evident you are not afraid of size, how does your approach to creating large-scale works differ from smaller scale pieces?

LX1: I was always impress by big pieces in museum as well as this big Saber LA river piece for example. When I was younger, I was painting with a good friend of mine [Erico], who had this

great style and funk and amazing colour [theory] but also the skill to go big and fast. I think this made my mind on the way of doing it. Efficiency and site specific approach. I'm also really keen of small pieces, got a lot of paper collages, geometrical drawing, large scales project mockups and sketches, documenting. I have a lot of the work for my own personal archives, I will probably use these images and make a book of out of them.

BBB: On that note, how do processes compare and contrast between that of indoor work and outdoor work?

LX1: Well, I process it the same way











I think, except for some materials or support. Something like land-art but urban, Ha Ha. When we were talking about mediums, I told you about this cycle of wood/paper/cardboard which lead me to replace in the original place some art made of those materials? I try to take advantage of the space, observing volumes, shapes, shadows, found stuff and mixing it.

BBB; As an artist who has exhibited throughout the major corners of the world, did you ever believe this would have been a possibility in the earlier stages of your career?

LX1: There is a lot of places I haven't been or exhibited that I would love to still, But I'm feeling really lucky to be able to create art and make a living out of it. I also really enjoy working and spend a lot of time in my studio as well.

BBB: How do you feel the arts communities differentiate between these cities? Do you have a favourite and why?

LX1: Despite globalization, there is a lot much difference between London or Berlin, NYC, Milano, as there is between 2 near small villages! I

could probably live in those big cities for a while but I need countryside, nature and quiet. But [in regards to your question] I would have to say London. Nice people, amazing artists, great food, good football teams and good friends. This since we did the "Megaro" project with Steve More, Remi Rough and Augustine Kofie is kind of our HQ, Ha Ha.

BBB: You're also a member of Agents Of Change, what do you enjoy about working with a team as opposed to individually? How does working within a group setting help or



hinder your solo work?

I met Remi Rough in the early 2000s, and we did a show in Strasbourg together. When him and the british part of AOC created the crew asked me to joint. I love those guys. Some

incredible people, artist, friends coming from so many different places, talking the same shit, sharing and experiencing together. I'm learning a lot from all of them. I'm trying to do my best to be at the same level as those amazing artists! I'm feeling really lucky

being a part of it! i won't name the 12 of it but I can say that they all excel so much in their art! I am their number one fan! You should check out Steve More's latest show in Amsterdam! Definitely one the best art shows I've seen lately!

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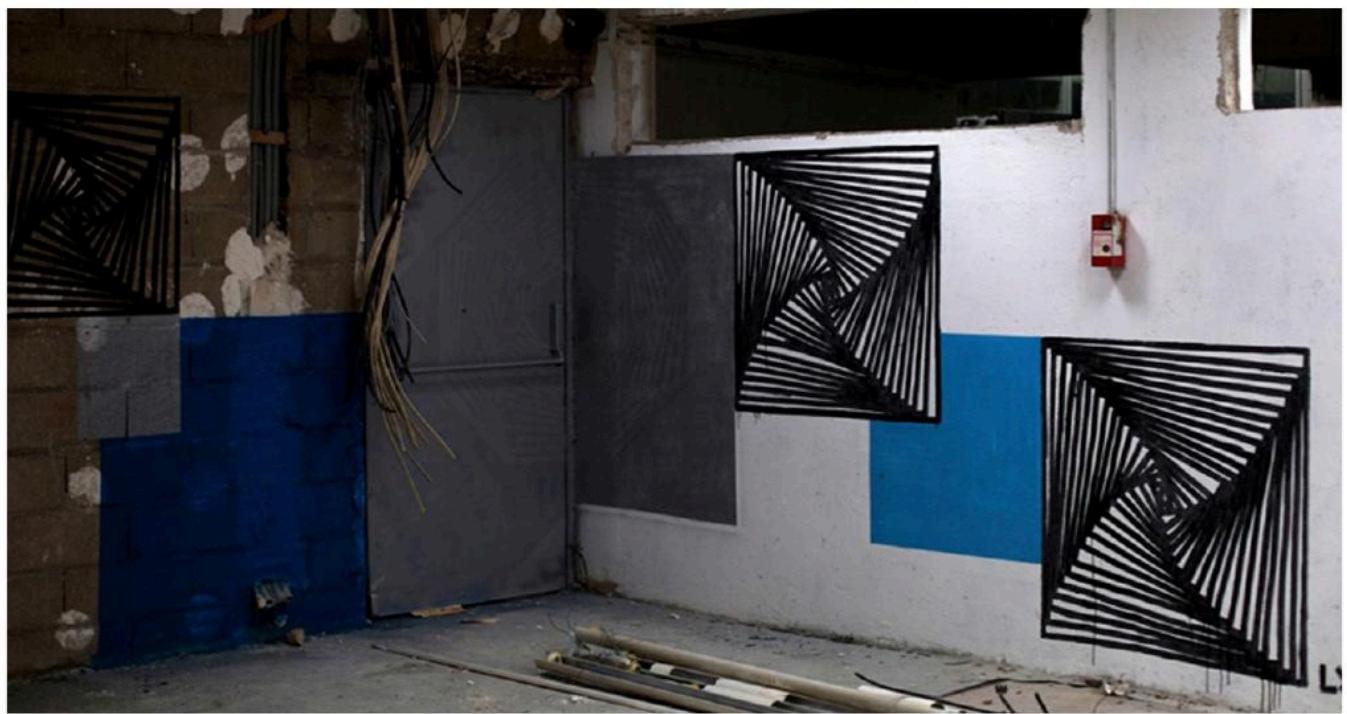
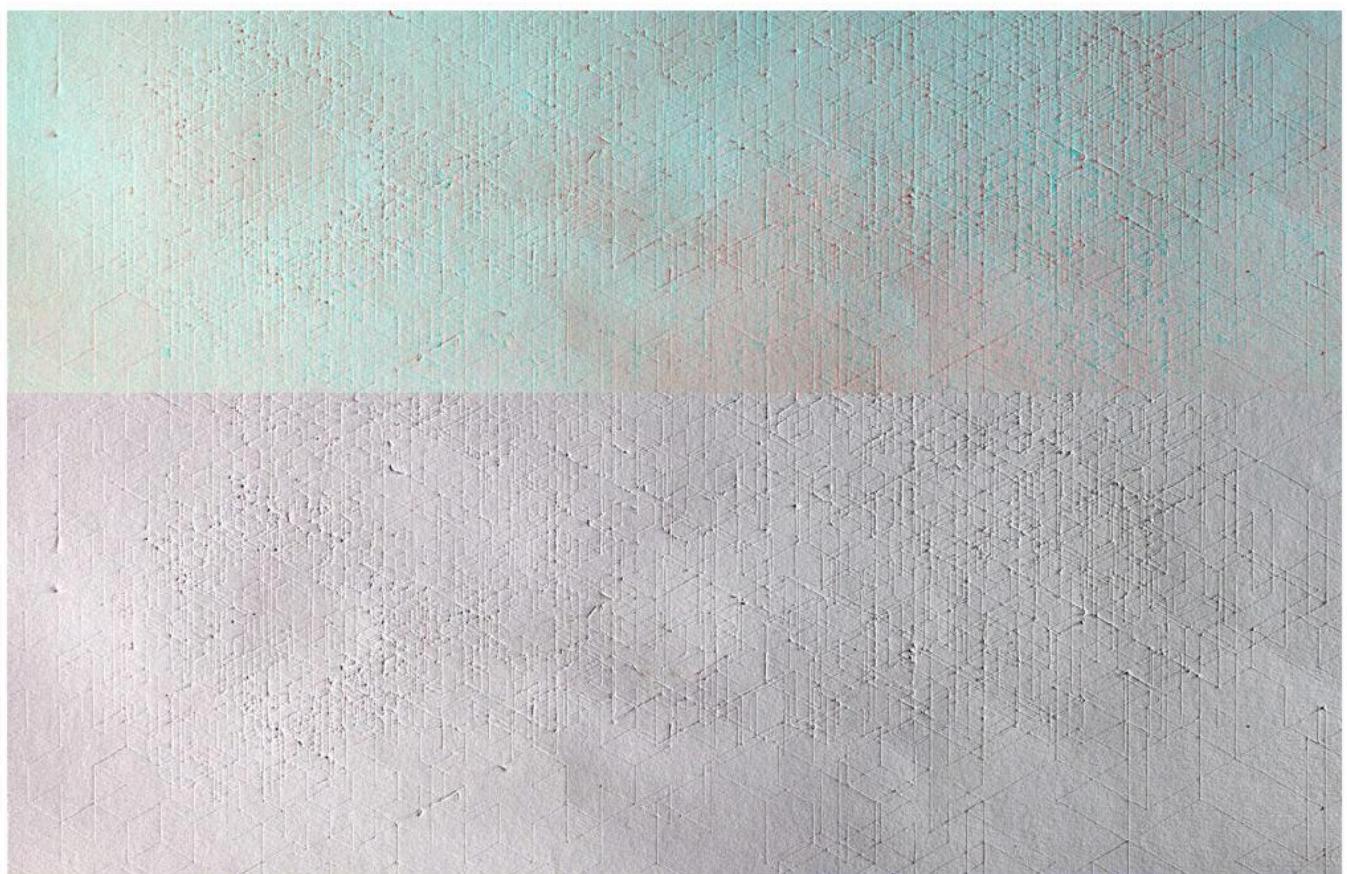
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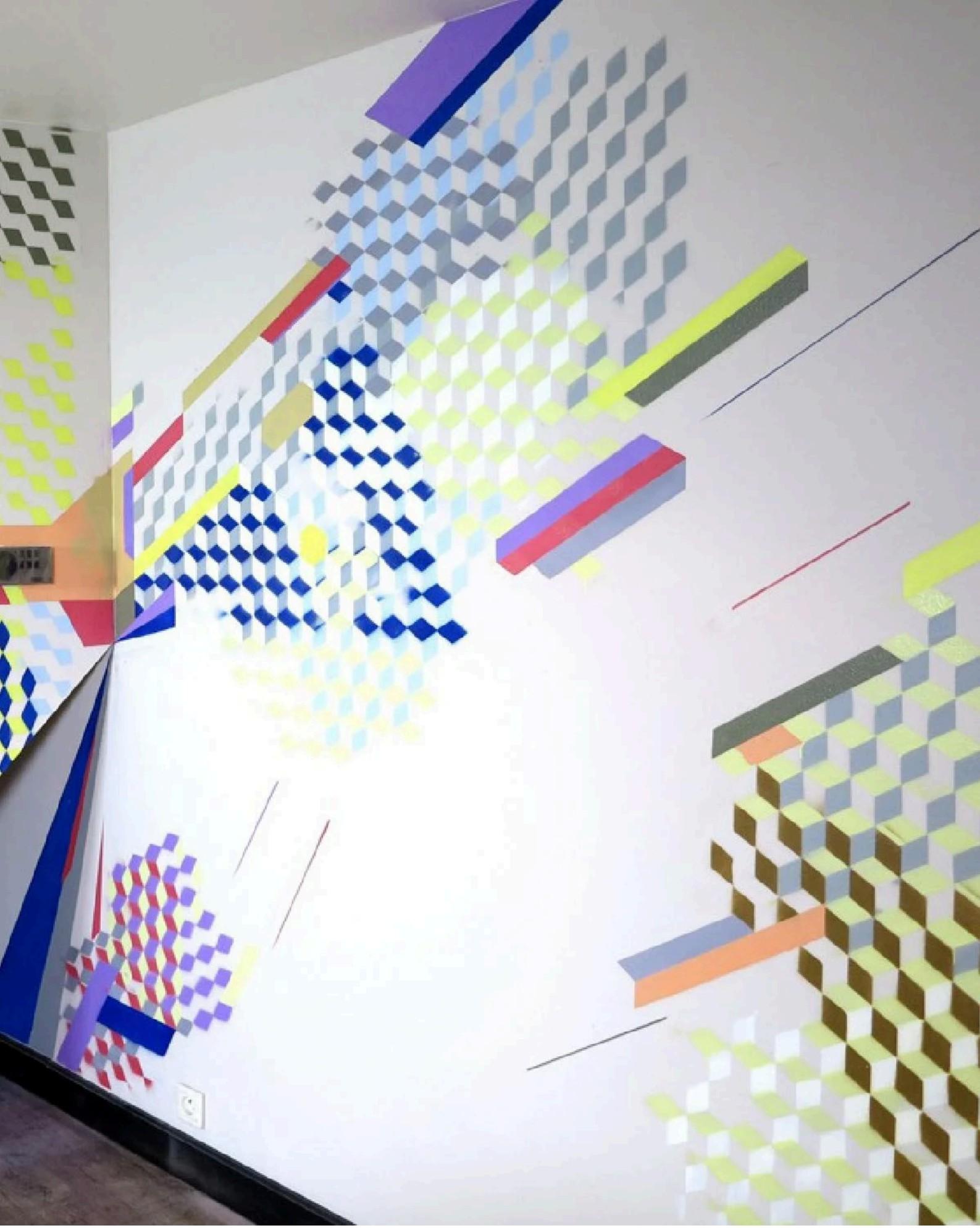
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PHOTO CREDIT : THOMAS LANG











BSM 20th ANNIVERSARY

AN INTRODUCTION HERE WOULD BE POINTLESS BECAUSE WE HAVE ONE OF OUR CORRESPONDANTS GIVE YOU AN INFORMATIVE LESSON AND REVIEW OF THE EVENT AT HAND. LET THE IMAGES AND WORDS FROM OUR OWN, CRS PHOTO, SWEEP YOU AWAY INTO ANOTHER DIMENSION OF CANADIAN GRAFFITI HISTORY.

20 years is an impressive milestone by any standard, but when it comes to the history of the BSM crew this longevity has resulted in some of the most diverse styles coming together and consistently pushing the boundaries of the Canadian graffiti scene in ways no one could have anticipated.

The crew kicked off the celebrations with a collaborative art show at The Mascot on July 11th in downtown Toronto's Parkdale neighbourhood. The turnout was great with supporters spilling out onto the sidewalk throughout the event. It was a gathering of old friends, crew members, and art enthusiast from many walks of life and a variety of age groups; an eclectic mix of people coming together for a momentous occasion.

With creative works in all types of media including welded sculptures, fine detailed wood work, brush work on canvas and illustrated prints just to name a few; there was no shortage of visual stimulation to accompany the conversations about past experiences and reminiscent stories from the memory banks of a few of Canada's most recognized names in the graffiti.

The celebrations continued in a more intimate setting the following day; Kwest had secured a large scale wall in the Roncesvalles and Dundas area. We were privileged to be invited to spend some time hanging out with the guys and documenting the event to share with you.

After a few small hiccups involving a clogged pressurized paint sprayer slowing down the original printing of the wall, the day slowly got underway. A makeshift sun shade/DJ booth was set up, and the audio stylings of BC based producers Phonograff and Take5 were pulsing out of the sound system. Outlines started to take shape on the wall while many of Toronto's heavy hitting style masters dropped in to hang out with their local and west coast friends; a handful were even added to the wall roster.

The festivities carried on over the next couple of days as the once bare grey wall was now masked by a variety of styles from each crew member that made the trek to Toronto, with any leftover space filled by friends of BSM. Overall the weekend was a huge success, a fun and memorable time was had by all, a great deal of knowledge was passed down to the

newer generation, and Toronto ended up with another fantastic vivid mural for a community to enjoy before a new condo development takes its place in the years to come.

The owners of 383 Sorauren were gracious enough to allow the creative minds of BSM to transform this space, and while it'll be sad to see this building torn down eventually, it does bring hope that in future developments condo companies may start to consider the advantages of providing spaces for the creative community to add a bit of colour to the neighbourhoods they've grown up in.

BSM crew was started in 1993 by their founding member Take5, and has expanded into a super crew of DJ's, producers, graffiti artists, fine artists and furniture makers among many others. The different styles within the crew are always evolving and we here at BizarreBeyondBelief are looking forward to many more years of Boundary Smashing Media.

BSM is: Take5, Sensr, Sight, Cmor, Other, Kwest, Phonograff, Junction Joe, Rhinorek, BNE, SK, and Shortfuse.

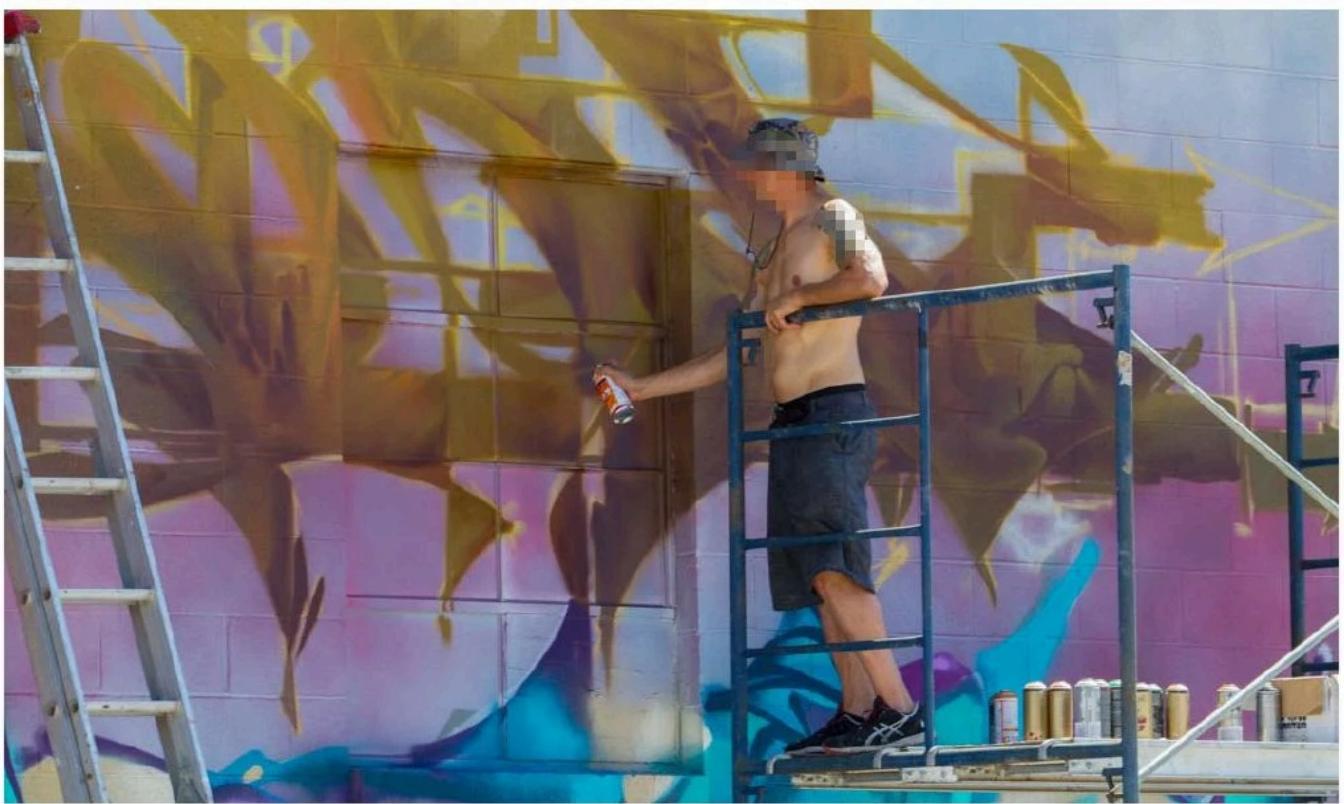
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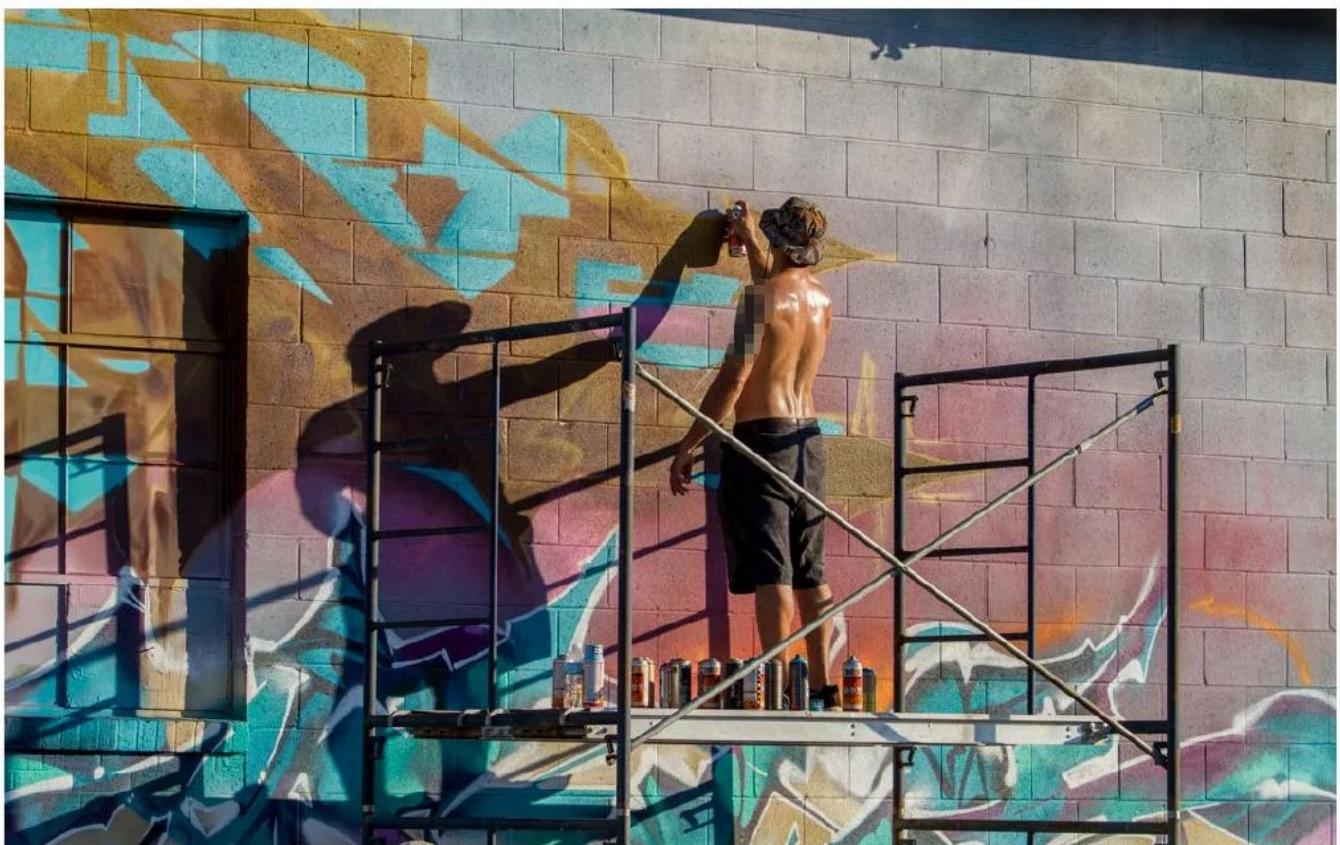










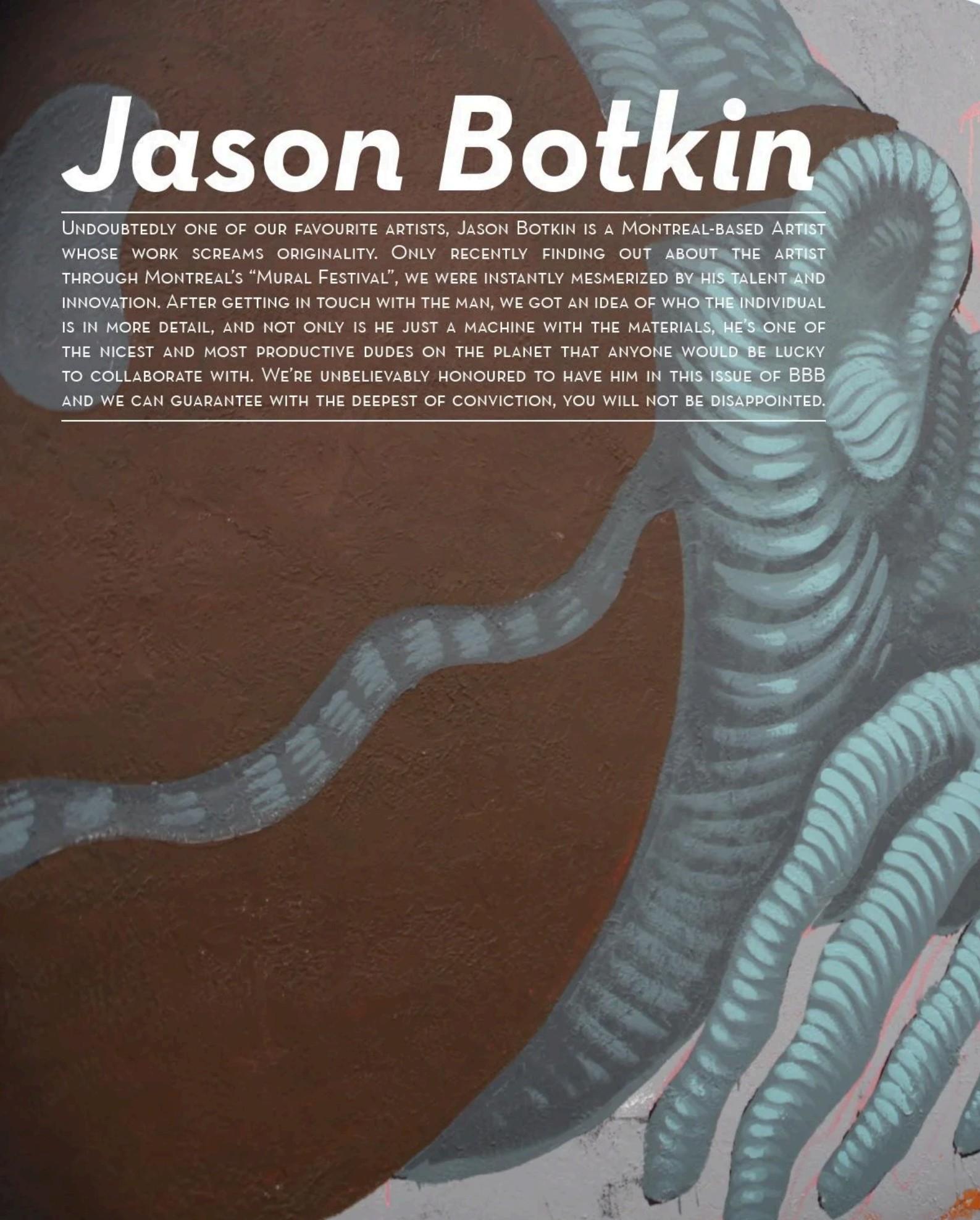






Jason Botkin

UNDoubtedly one of our favourite artists, Jason Botkin is a Montreal-based artist whose work screams originality. Only recently finding out about the artist through Montreal's "Mural Festival", we were instantly mesmerized by his talent and innovation. After getting in touch with the man, we got an idea of who the individual is in more detail, and not only is he just a machine with the materials, he's one of the nicest and most productive dudes on the planet that anyone would be lucky to collaborate with. We're unbelievably honoured to have him in this issue of BBB and we can guarantee with the deepest of conviction, you will not be disappointed.





Bizarre Beyond Belief: Born in the United States, now Canadian resident, what made you decide to relocate permanently from your native country?

Jason Botkin: I moved when I was very young, at the age of 5. My dad got a job as a pastor at a church in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I hated it at first. Moving from Colorado to the coldest, flattest place I could imagine existing on earth was a bit of a shock!. Plus there were now Burger Kings at the time. Over time, I grew to love that town however.

BBB: Ironically, many artists from Canada would aspire to move south of the border to further their career, you have done the opposite, what would your advice be to said individuals?

JB: I lived in Denver again as an adult, and have travelled the States extensively, but my heart stays in Canada. I've spent most of my life here, but don't take for granted what an amazing country this is. Not sure that I'll live in Canada forever, as the opportunities down south are big, but I'm happy for now. Montreal is a fantastic city to make art in, but it has a pretty weak buyer's market sadly.

Other Canadian cities are stronger in this sense, but lack the cultural richness i love about mount real. I've not really got advice to those looking to move south for greener pastures, other than to go and check it out. Make a choice that feels right, even sometimes if your head says otherwise.

BBB: You attended the Alberta College of Art and Design, what were the reasons to attend a Canadian institution as opposed to an American one?

JB: American colleges and universities cost a relative arm and a leg compared



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to their Canadian counterparts. As money was an issue, it was the obvious choice in moving to Alberta. Not for art mind you, but to pursue snowboarding originally. I wanted to go pro, and felt only remotely interested in a career in art at the time. That changed quickly!

BBB: With the internet, social medias and various forms of communications which have developed over the years, did you feel attending an arts institution was necessary?

JB: Tough question to answer. I really loved it for many reasons. I felt really pushed to explore myself, and the work I was capable of making. More importantly, I felt very encouraged to articulate myself... the choices I was making in the

work. Developing a critical eye on my practice was and is very valuable. Art schools aren't for everyone, but they can be remarkable tools once one realizes that you alone are driving the ship. I guess as with the rest of life, sooner you figure that out and put your hands on the damn wheel to start steering, the better. Schools offer a very intense workshop environment,

with access to a huge amount of resources, in both material and personnel. You have to swallow your ego a bit in order to really learn.

BBB: Did you maintain the ideologies and methodologies indoctrinated at university or did you stray away from your

formal training throughout your career?

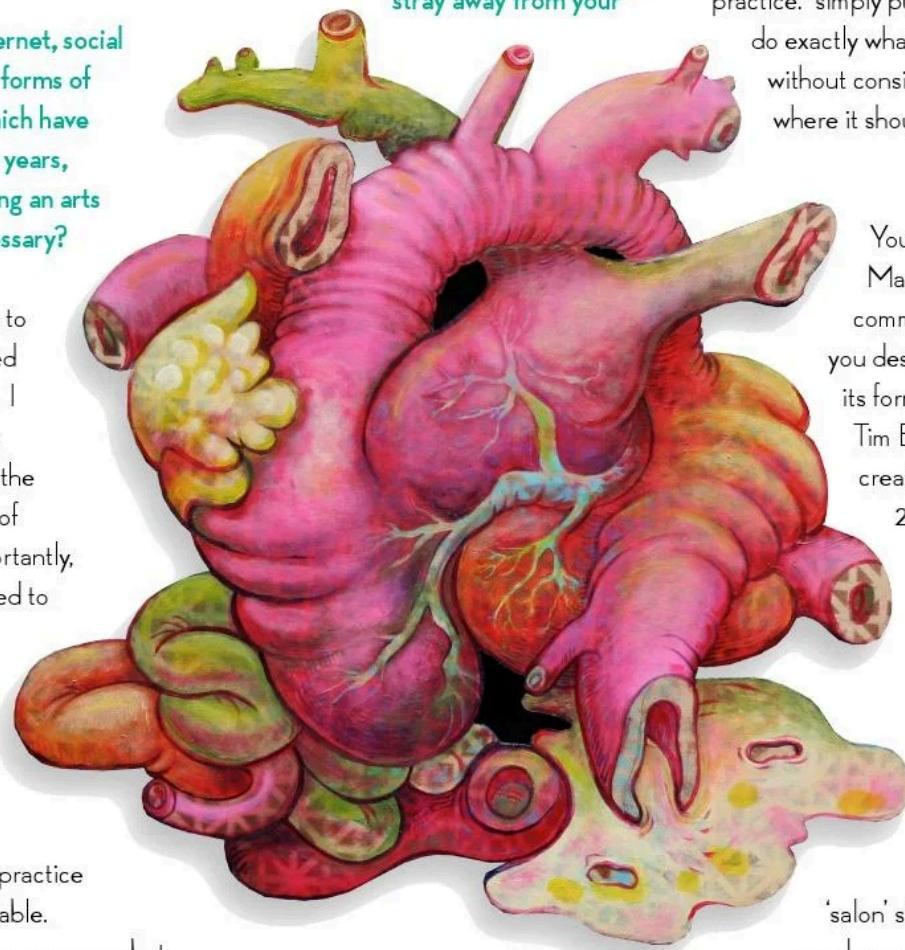
JB: I quit making art immediately after school, for nearly 6 odd years. I had trouble understanding how I fit into this world of art as I saw it then.

The whole thing felt soulless. When I decided again to slowly pick up my art again, the tools were still there. While I was still aware of the burdensome codification of the world of art, I'd shed much of my disillusionment with the subject, and could apply my own renewed ideologies to my practice. simply put, I felt free to do exactly what I wanted to do, without considerations as to where it should or should not be.

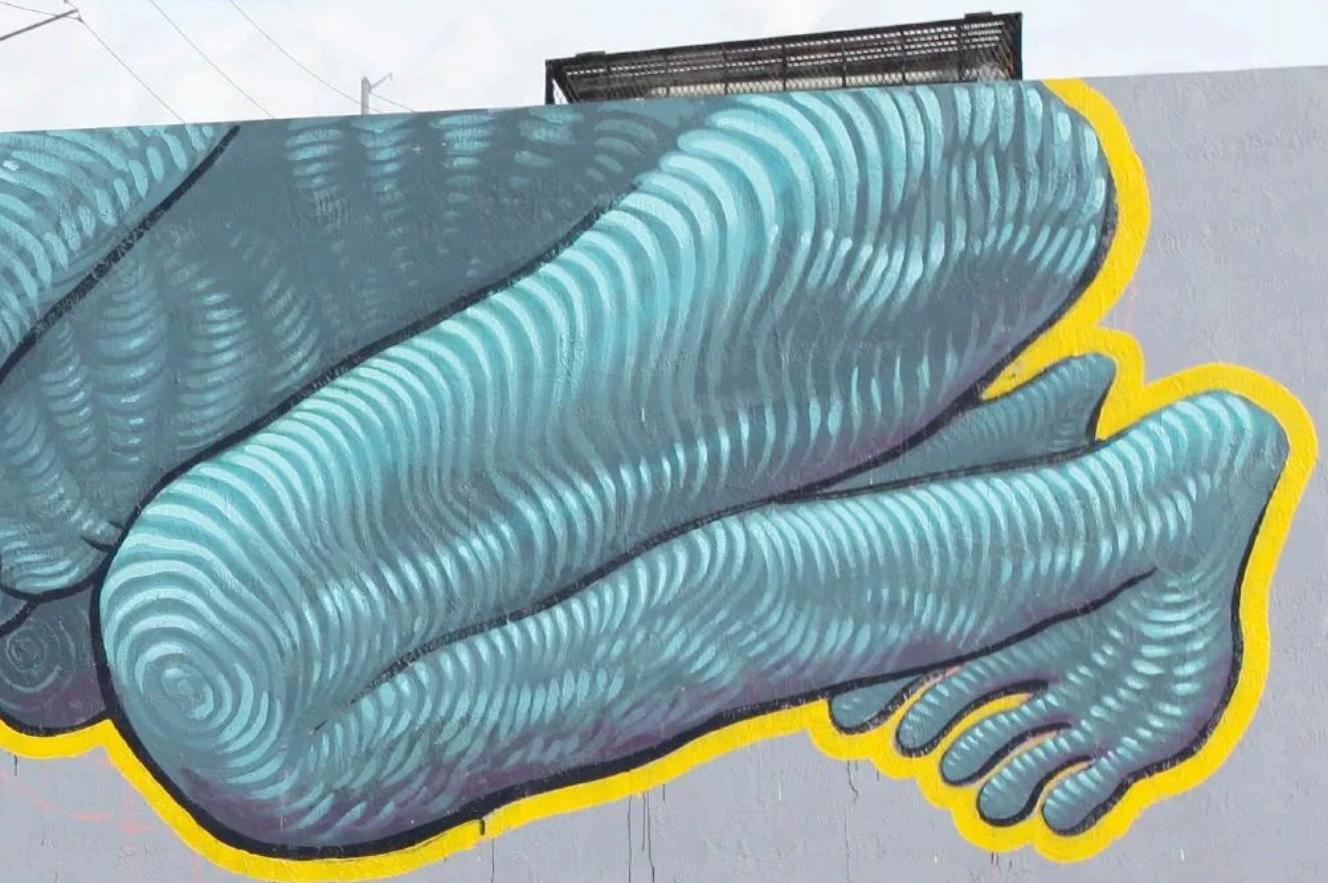
You co-founded En Masse, a brilliant community of artists, can you describe the origins of its formation?

Tim Barnard and I created this project in 2009 at the Galerie Pangée. We were given carte blanche with this beautiful space in the heart of old Montreal. At first, we planned to host some a sort of gigantic 'salon' style exhibition of works created by local artists

from the various underground art communities, many of whom had no gallery exposure. We quickly dropped the idea however, in pursuit of an exhibition format that would be far more dynamic and experimental. That was the short and sweet birth of







the project. EN MASSE is best perceived as a collaborative drawing initiative and not as a collective, whose life depends on us bringing to the table a steady stream of new artists, thus refreshing the structure and voice of this project in an ever-evolving manner.

BBB: The public can misunderstand mural work, especially done with spray paint, how has the reception been from the public for En Masse?

JB: If i understand the question, then we're getting into the territory between murals, street art, and graffiti. If so, then yes, there are many public and internal misconceptions... general points of bad communication. I suppose this is normal within most aspects of human life...we live in a funny tower of Babel. The EM project has been received beautifully for the most part, publicly sense. It's done much for a broad appreciation of the underground arts wherever it has travelled. But this effect has only been a secondary goal for the initiative. As an activity, it embodies a very important sociological and political message without ever having to say so. I've very happy with this aspect of the project, and it's been

the primary reason i've dedicated so much of my time to seeing it take off over the last 3-4 years. I love taking part in these collaborative achievements; the collective testing of some deeply embedded, and too often flawed social realities of how we relate to each other. Life and relationships are so damned good when the barriers fall!



BBB: You have a vast range of work from installation to large-scale murals, how does your approach to each differ or correlate?

My work does vary quite a bit. Beside being endlessly curious in exploring new mediums and ways of approaching work, it's a gift and great pleasure to be able to jump freely from gallery

work, installations, and murals, without being contained by one or the other. Each approach has it's own challenges and rewards, which are at times completely different from each other.

Similar themes drive all of my work. For example, much of my past work was composed around themes concerning the transmigration of the soul. The mural work is an extension of these ideas through some of the characters developed, but at times, the connections aren't as obvious, even if my process in coming to the work is the same.

My images come out of a very intuitive process. It's only later when upon reflection, I begin to see the thread the ties all this stuff together.

In many of your murals you utilize spray-paint, how do you feel this medium works as opposed to the traditional brush practice?

I like spray paint. I'm not great at it yet, but i'm picking it up fast. On the walls, i'm not thrilled with how long the colors last...they tend to fade pretty



quick. I'm really not big on the smell either...toxic business. An expensive way to melt brain cell. My costs are low with the latex and brush, but using some cans, especially near the end, is an excellent way to achieve nice effect i can't get with a brush. It's a great combo. You can't beat cans for on-the-go convenience however. Pretty easy to carry! I'd like to get much better in the coming year at these things, especially after watching some of my amigos rip walls up with this stuff!

BBB: Your work is anthropomorphic in subject matter but the aesthetic is almost other-wordly, what would were your inspirations in developing this style?

JB: This has been an organic process. I've spent a lot of time absorbing old engravings

and alchemical emblematic imagery. Fascinating and endlessly weird stuff. I'm intrigued by the cryptic encoding of arcane knowledge by old artists, who had such a broad understanding of the world through art, science, math, and the human spirit. I worked for years in charcoal on paper. It was the cheapest ground and medium available to me, and I loved it's ephemeral nature. I could do these huge drawings for almost nothing, and when they literally tore in half as often happen, trying to move them around, they were dead. Nothing precious nor lasting about the work...simply good drawings and statements made in a time and place, with a short shelf life. I was never big on the monetization of art. Seemed so foreign and ill fitting to my own process. I've always been interested in shaping out forms using

lines. They are so empty next to each other, yet like a web, can so beautifully describe space.

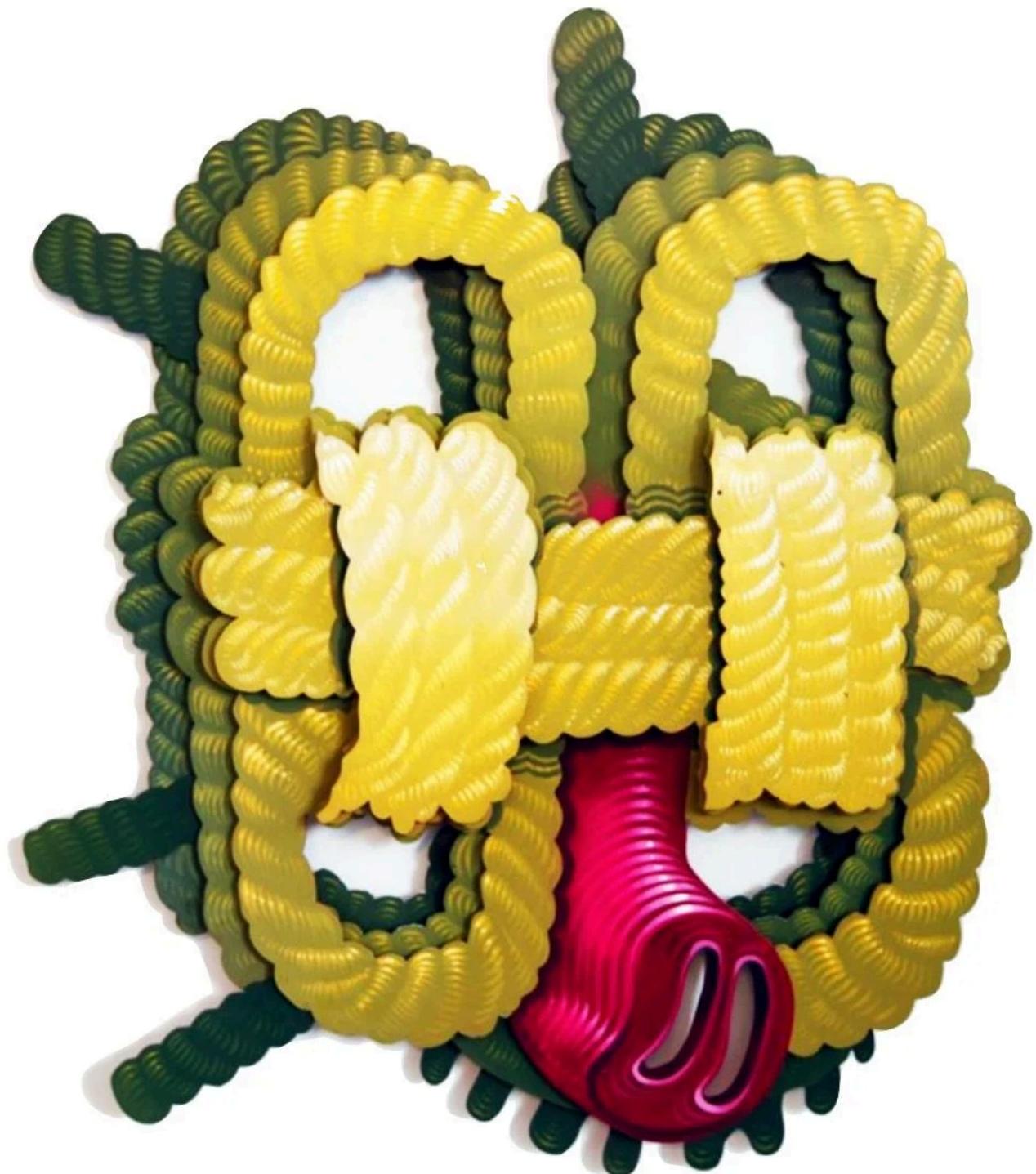
JB: When it's time to be buried 6 feet under ground, what 3 things would you have accompany you in your coffin for the rest of eternity?

JB: Ha Ha Ha! I'd want a genie in a bottle of coconut water + three wishes!

BBB: Where does Jason Botkin, as an artist and individual, see himself in 5, 10, or 25 years?

JB: I've got a pretty good sense of my work's future direction, but as an artist and an individual, not quite sure. I do know i'll still be making art, and working hard to improve the conditions of life around me. These things bring me pleasure!

WWW.JASONBOTKIN.COM



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